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A COMPREHENSIVE CHURCH

BY

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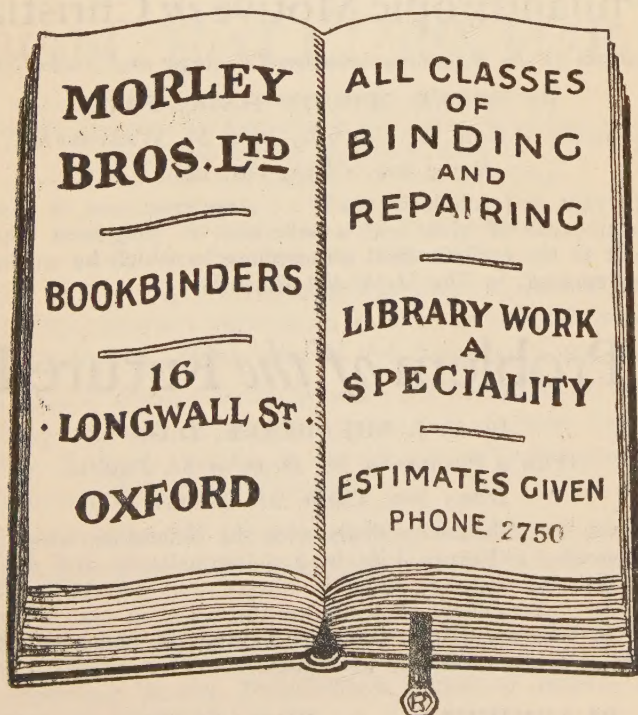
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A State without the means of change is without the means of its conservation.—*Edmund Burke*.

Nos. 5, 6 & 7. AUGUST, SEPT., OCT., 1939. VOL. XXIX.

A COMPREHENSIVE CHURCH THE TWENTY-SIXTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF MODERN CHURCHMEN

By THE EDITOR.

THE twenty-sixth Annual Conference of Modern Churchmen held at Girton College, Cambridge, August 28—September 1, terminated 24 hours earlier than was originally intended, owing to the German invasion of Poland. As a consequence, the last four papers, actually in print at the time and published in this number, were unable to be read and discussed.

'A Comprehensive Church,' the theme selected for consideration by the Conference, was treated from converging points of view in the following fourteen papers:

The Ideal of a Comprehensive Church, by Sir Cyril Norwood, President of St. John's College, Oxford.

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The attendance at the Conference was large and the discussions exceptionally good. Unfortunately Sir Cyril Norwood, our President, Sir Francis Freemantle, M.P., one of our opening speakers, Dr. Bleeker of Utrecht and two other representatives of Continental Liberal Christian movements were prevented by the international crisis at the last moment from attending. The Conference welcomed fraternal greetings from various parts of the world, the most significant of these being the cordial message from the Patriarch Prochazka of the Czechoslovak Church, delivered by Dr. Hnik of Prague University, the Patriarch's official representative in England.

The Patriarch's message opened by recalling his visit to Cambridge just eight years ago as a member of the International Council of the World Alliance for Friendship through the

Churches. The high hopes then entertained had in the interval been 'cast down but not destroyed.' The Patriarch stressed the great ideals of Christian faith, love, and freedom shared in common by the Czechoslovak Church and the Modern Churchmen's Union and looked forward to their fuller practical realization in the years to come.

At the daily celebrations of the Holy Communion, the Bishop of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich celebrated using the rite of 1662 with deviations permitted by the Deposited Book. Canon Douglas Richardson celebrated making use of the Harbourne rite; and Dr. C. J. Wright, Professor at Didsbury College, Manchester, assisted by three Anglican Priests, celebrated after the methodist manner. At Evensong, Canon Richardson's Revised Service was used, and helpful addresses were delivered by the Rev. A. W. Adams (Chaplain of Ripon Hall), the Rev. J. K. Nettlefold (Rector of Bitterley), the Rev. C. G. Challenger (Vicar of Hill, Warwickshire).

TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE CHURCH.

There are two ways in which a Church may be comprehensive—comprehensive in ideal, comprehensive in actuality. The Christian Church is comprehensive in ideal: it believes that it came into existence in order to embrace mankind, widely separated by racial, religious, political and social differences.

It exists to unite human beings in a particular way: not by abolishing their racial, political and social distinctions, but by uniting them all in obedience to God, the Divine Father, and by uniting them in spiritual and moral fellowship with one another. In order to achieve this unification an organization is needful. And this organization is the Church of Christ. Curiously enough this organization which came into existence to provide human unification by breaking down all the walls of partition (as the writer of the Epistle to the Ephesians calls them) which separate man from man, has itself only too frequently added to our human divisions and accentuated them.

The great ecclesiastical problem to-day is how to make the Church, which exists for purposes of human unification, a unifying and not a divisive factor in our modern world.

It is clear that in the first case the Christian Church can only become a unifying factor if it, and each of its members, possesses the Spirit of Christ—the Spirit of whole-hearted love towards God and towards men. To secure such a spirit is no easy matter, and there are some who would hold that it is quite impossible of achievement. When we look back on the moral and spiritual evolution of mankind, we do not regard such achievement as impossible although it is obviously something which cannot be achieved easily or in the near future.

However, although the progressive realization of the Spirit of Love by the Church is essential if it is to unite mankind, yet it is not all that is required. Human unity, besides being based on the spirit of love, has also to be based on truth. Truth is the supreme object of the research of the philosopher, the scientist, and the theologian, and if they ever agree together it is only when they are able to unite in the truth.

Here a difficulty presents itself, for the spirit of truth and the spirit of love can so easily come into conflict in a society which neither loves perfectly nor knows perfectly. Bitter conflicts are liable to take place, so history indicates, between the possessors of old truth and the seekers after new truth. 'Stand thou on that side for on this am I.' The problem of how to unite in a spirit of love those who stand at different stages in the advance into the truth is one of profound difficulty. There seem to us to be several lines of possible solution.

We can say Love is everything : the truth does not matter in comparison with love. St. Augustine said : 'Love, and do what you will.' We may add : Love, and believe what you will, but neither of these precepts is practicable unless we interpret love as comprehending both the moral and the rational. Then it is a case of doing the right in a spirit of love : holding, pursuing, and teaching truth in the spirit of love : resolved never to sacrifice right, as we hold it, or truth as we see it, except it be of course in response to a truer right and a greater truth, but in such a way as to attract rather than to antagonize those who differ. Unless this policy be pursued, the ideal of love will lead us nowhere. Stagnation, not progress will ensue :

'Hard upon hard makes a bad stone wall,
Soft upon soft makes none at all.'

In considering the ideal of a comprehensive Church there are four preliminary questions which must be answered.

- (1) What are the causes of divisions in the Christian Church?
- (2) What are the things which make for Christian Unity?
- (3) What is the kind of unity for which Christians should strive?
- (4) What are the best practical methods to-day for advancing such unity with the purpose of securing a comprehensive Church?

In answer to the first question we may reply: 'The variety of human nature,' but this is too Latitudinarian an answer. Men are of very varied types, but this variety ought not to be a cause of division within the Christian Church. In St. Paul's view, the Christian Church existed to break down all these natural differences and to unite in one body, 'Jew and Gentile, Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free.'

There is another cause for our divisions besides those due to natural causes. Sancho-Panza's dictum: 'We are all of us as God made us, and some of us a great deal worse,' indicates a much more real and frequent source of Christian division. Men's vices and moral weaknesses, due to 'the lust of the flesh' which doth remain, yea in them that are regenerated' (*Art. IX*), are a much more real cause of Church division than are natural differences of race, language, political organization, local customs, etc.

We do well to recall the conclusion of the 'ever memorable' John Hales in this connection, that it is not those who are in schism but those who caused them to be in schism who are the real schismatics.¹

It is plain that only the growth of the fruits of the Spirit in the Christian Church can eliminate this cause of 'our unhappy divisions.'

Another cause of Christian division is purely intellectual, due, no doubt, to different degrees of mental power and of knowledge. If we ought to love God with the mind, and we fail to exert our mind in this exercise, we may easily become separ-

¹ See John Hales' *Golden Remains*: Essay on Schism.

ated from those who do. We do not wish to exalt above measure this intellectual love of God, but we ought to recognize the duty of practising it. Although simple ignorant persons are apt to confuse it with intellectual arrogance as did the plain man who asked the great Dr. South: 'Doctor, has God any need of your learning?' To which Dr. South replied: 'God has no more need of my learning than he has of your ignorance.'

Nevertheless, a united Christian Church, if it would remain united in the Truth, must stress the great unifying value of thinking together to the best of its ability, and the value of those co-operated researches and discussions which conduce to the same. In answering the first question: What are the causes of divisions in the Christian Church? we have in some degree indicated the answer to the second question: What are the things which make for Christian Unity?

The gifts of the Spirit must be the chief unifying power, and the influence of these gifts will manifest themselves in three main ways.

(a) United worship of God.

(b) Co-operation in philanthropic service.

(c) United advance into the fuller knowledge of the Truth.

It has been said that the Stockholm Conference in its researches into the means of Christian Unity arrived at the conclusion expressed by the slogan 'Dogma divides, but service unites.' This suggests that a united Christian Church must dispense with dogma and only concern itself with service. This conclusion is superficially false. We cannot dispense with dogma or doctrine if by it we mean the intellectual formulation of religious and ethical truth. We must as Christians know Whom we worship, why we worship Him, and what is His Will. The answers to these fundamental questions constitute dogmas, and without agreement in them, Christians would fail in attaining essential unity. Not only unity of worship and unity of service, but unity of thinking, contribute towards Christian unity, and all three are essential, although not to the same degree, in the life of a united and comprehensive Christian Church.

But when we consider the causes of 'our unhappy divisions' and their remedy, it is not sufficient to answer: human selfish-

ness, human intolerance, human exclusiveness, pride, love of power; nor on the other hand to add to them by insisting on the divisive effects of human ignorance and the vices of prejudice and stupidity, which are associated with human ignorance. There are long and painful memories of misunderstanding, injustice, persecution bound up with the origin and history, loyalties and sacrifices of all the Christian sects. The 'faith of our fathers,' the 'blood of the martyrs,' the 'sacred heritage' quicken the pulse, inspire the resolution, never to sacrifice these things for the dubious gains promised by fellowship with those who do not really value those things which cost our Christian sect so much and have made it our spiritual home.

Surely these loyalties, even though in some cases not entirely enlightened, are so noble that we cannot ask our fellow-Christians to sacrifice them as the price of fellowship in a universal Christian Communion. The unity which we seek must somehow permit in its large embrace the retention of these ancestral, domestic loyalties. 'Christian unity without tears' may not be an inspiring slogan, and seems to conflict with the ideal of Christian progress as the Way of the Cross. But we have to be very sure in demanding sacrifices in the interests of Christian unity and a comprehensive Church, that we are demanding the right kind of sacrifices.

Critical examination indicates that many Christian sects are separated by differences arising from dogmatic formulation, Biblical exegesis, ecclesiastical organization, etc. The authority of these differences varies with levels of Christian culture and intellectual enlightenment.

A comprehensive Church must needs contain Christians possessed of various degrees of enlightenment and manifold grades of culture. We can demand no dead or uniform level, only a progressive ascent, in these matters. 'Holy Scripture,' says St. Augustine, 'contains pools at which lambs may drink, and depths in which elephants must swim.' He was right when he saw the Catholic Church as a *corpus permixtum*. A comprehensive Church, like the fisherman's net, must gather every kind. Uniformity of dogma, uniformity of organization, uniformity of rite, may seem a necessity to a bureaucratic Catholic, but not to a comprehensive Catholic. A comprehensive Church must be pos-

sessed of infinite variety in its thought, in its doctrine, in its rites, in its organisation.

The one thing required for unity is that these differences should not be regarded as legitimate causes of conflict and separation among Christians. We have to learn to differ without ceasing to love—a very hard, even though it be a very trite saying.

Christian unity has to be primarily a spiritual unity—a unity of love, a unity of freedom. It must also strive to be—and here is the difficulty—a unity of Truth. Here is a very real *crux*. We pray at the Holy Communion that we may ‘agree in the Truth of Thy holy Word and live in unity, and godly love.’ When we consider all the forms of Christian Truth and all its degrees, it is obvious that agreement here is impossible. We observe, however, that the term used is singular, ‘the Truth.’ This seems to indicate some fundamental essential underlying reality from which the various forms are derived.

If such there be, and such there is, it is possible for all Christians to unite in it. This is not rightly described as the irreducible minimum or lowest common denominator. What it really is, is ‘the Truth as it is in Jesus.’ It is found in His personality, His Gospel, His spirit, and as a consequence in His fellowship with the Divine Father and the human race.

There is the centre of Truth for the Christian. The circumference of the circle will probably vary for every individual, but the comprehensive Church can only be concerned for the purposes of unity with the centre of the circle of Truth and not with its circumference.

What are the best practical methods to-day for advancing such unity with the purpose of securing a comprehensive Church?

In striving for a united Church, Christians have to consider not only the Church, but the World. There is a danger that they may succeed to-day in uniting what remains of the Christian Church in such a way as to lose the world. The only kind of Christian re-union which Christian policy demands is the securing of a comprehensive Christian Church which will not only embrace the existing schismatic Christian communions, but finally the whole human race. If the Christian Church is con-

tented to remain a minority Church and not to become the Church of humanity, it has failed.

What we need is a new ideal of Christian Catholicism, and we are feeling our way towards it. By 'we' I mean the Reformed Churches of north-western Europe and America and the Eastern Orthodox Churches. It is not possible at the present time to include the Roman Church in this movement, but should the movement succeed, the Roman Church will be profoundly influenced by it.

The Oecumenical Movement which comprises the Faith and Order Movement and the Life and Work Movement represents the form which the attempt to realize this new Christian Catholicism is taking. There is no need here to expound the character and methods of the Oecumenical Movement. This exposition is contained in many volumes. Nothing more need here be said than that it is the most promising of Church Movements seeking Christian unity in our modern world, and that it is the duty and wisdom of all Christian Modernists to study and support it with sympathy and criticism.

Perhaps a weakness of the Oecumenical Movement is that it seems to be much more concerned with striving to get international and political, social and economic, foundations of the comprehensive Church right than with getting its dogmatic foundations right. The Oecumenical Movement recognizes that it has much to learn, and far to go, and that progress must of necessity be slow. Its danger is lest it should succumb to those temptations which have rendered the League of Nations ineffective.

This Oecumenical Movement is essentially a movement directed from above, by which we do not mean to claim for it a supernatural origin which distinguishes it from all other movements aiming at Christian unity, but that it is a movement directed by a very select group of Christian leaders who stand above the Churches which they are seeking to unite and who perhaps at the present time represent little more than themselves in the membership of those Churches. They are the prophets, the statesmen, the philosophers and the sages of the movement. Generals who may be said to possess a staff but no battalions.

This existing situation indicates the need for another movement working, not from above and outside the various Christian sects, but from within them. A movement which in time will create the battalions that will follow the Oecumenical idealists in their unifying mission. This second movement demands the loyalty and effort of every Christian who favours the aim of the Oecumenical Movement. The practical task which lies ahead of these loyalists is to prepare the way of the new Christian Catholicism in their own particular Christian sect. This is indeed a pedestrian and difficult task. How to inspire the Oecumenical spirit in our own parish or meeting house or mission hall or school : and how to realize it in the reform of old institutions and in the creation of new ones—that is the many-sided and difficult task of the would-be builder of the comprehensive Church. This is the local and parochial correlative response which must be secured if the Oecumenical Movement, planned in council chambers and proclaimed on public platforms and in the popular press, is to achieve practical results.

It is here that the Modernist in the parish or congregation has his work cut out for him. The policy of isolation and criticism has to give place to the life of patient and perhaps even painful co-operation in view of a situation which will often seem hopeless, if not immoral—so many concessions and compromises are demanded by it. Nevertheless if the Modernist, be he Catholic or Evangelical, English Church or Free Church, has really counted the cost of what he is undertaking and is prepared to go forward without any expectation of seeing the triumph of his cause in his own day, he will not fail in having contributed to the ultimate realization of his ideal. It is not without significance that that great Modernist, Paul Sabatier, placed on the title page of his notable volume *Les Modernistes* the words of the Psalm both in the Vulgate and in the Old French version :

They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.

THE IDEAL OF A COMPREHENSIVE CHURCH

By SIR CYRIL NORWOOD, President of St. John's College, Oxford,
President of the Modern Churchmen's Union.

I AM very conscious, as I stand here at the opening of the Twenty-sixth Annual Conference of our Society, before we address ourselves to the consideration of *The Report on Doctrine in the Church of England*, that I am neither a philosopher nor a theologian, and that I have unworthily succeeded to predecessors who could rightfully claim both those titles. My claim to be heard, if I have any claim, is that I speak as an ordinary educated layman, a loyal member, in my own belief, of our National Church. In the days that are coming, and are even now come, when all the values of the Christian faith are put to open question, and held up to contempt, the views of the great mass of laymen, who are generally inarticulate, become important, and may perhaps serve to direct attention to the things which really matter. It is surely one of the essential needs of the present time that Christendom should find the way, if not to unite, at least to move towards, and not away from, each other. And if this Conference of ours does anything at all towards bringing those who think differently from each other into a state of better understanding and sympathy, it will have been worth while.

Such were the purposes and desire of those who were commissioned to prepare the *Report*, and they must be given credit for the fact that within the limit of their own membership, drawn from various schools of thought, they did attain to that better understanding and sympathy. I cannot, I think, do better than start from two or three passages from the Introductions of the Report and set them out as pointers for my address. The first is from the general Introduction :

‘There is not, and the majority of us do not desire that there should be, a system of distinctively Anglican Theology. The Anglican Churches have received and hold the faith of Catholic Christendom, but they have exhibited a rich variety in methods, both of approach and of interpretation. They are the heirs of the Reformation as well

as of the Catholic tradition ; and they hold together in a single fellowship of worship and witness those whose chief attachment is to each of these, and also those whose attitude to the distinctively Christian tradition is most deeply affected by the tradition of a free and liberal culture which is historically the bequest of the Greek spirit and was recovered for Western Europe at the Renaissance.'

This is a fair statement of the elements which our Church should comprehend, if we make rather more explicit the necessary place within the system of those who address themselves to the task of reconciling new truths with old and who refuse to allow orthodoxy to be identified with ignorance and obscurantism. This is implicit in the idea of the free and liberal culture which is the bequest of the Greek spirit, explicit also in the conception of the Holy Spirit within the Church. But it needs greater emphasis, since it is vital to the future of true religion continually in each generation to think things out afresh.

This description of various elements within the Church serves well enough as an account of the Church in its comparatively quiet historic past. But those who wrote the *Report* are conscious that those days have gone by, and at the end of their task they realized that the world had become different from what it had been at the start of their labours. May I therefore quote two more passages, both drawn from the Chairman's Introduction?

'Theology,' he writes, 'in the half century that ended with the war was such as is prompted by and promotes a ministry mainly pastoral ; we need and must work out for our own time a theology such as is prompted by and promotes a ministry at least as much evangelistic as pastoral.'

And to this I would add these words from an earlier part of the Introduction, which to my mind contains the great ideal, the only hope of the future :

'It has always been our desire to set forth the truth of the Everlasting Gospel unchanged in substance. Indeed we believe that its permanence amid the welter of modern theories, which seem to succeed each other with kaleidoscopic inconsequence, may be one of its chief means of drawing to itself the attention of a bewildered generation.'

Things move so rapidly to-day that though this *Report* is not much more than a year old, I believe that if the Introduction had been written now, the need would have been felt to be still more urgent, and the desirability of preaching the simple Gospel still more stressed.

It is clearly advisable, before one attempts the task of developing the idea of a comprehensive Church, to consider at the outset what its membership should properly be, and what its relation to the State. There are those, of course, who draw a sharp distinction between Church and State, and are ready at any moment to cry, 'Hands off Holy Things.' They would confine membership only to those who are full communicants according to the rites of the Church, and in thought they sometimes go further, and confine the true Church to those who take a particular view of the Sacraments and of the relations of the Church of England with Rome. There are others, less numerous, who take a view in violent opposition to this, but are not less exclusive in their conception of what membership should be. The former, as it seems to me, ought logically to cease to differentiate themselves from the Roman Catholic Church: the latter would reduce the Church of England to a sect, and not a very broadminded one at that. Both would divorce the Church from the Nation, both would make Disestablishment sooner or later inevitable, both are at issue with the theory of Church and State which has hitherto been in the main accepted.

It is worth while to go back and touch for a moment on the mediaeval theory of the Holy Roman Empire and the Holy Catholic Church, which was a noble conception, however full of imperfections both Church and Empire were in practice. It broke down hopelessly, but it was an anticipation of a world order to which humanity must somehow or other struggle in the future, if men and women are to live in security and happiness with a real chance of safety of body and sanity of soul. Let us not at any rate dismiss it as a wild dream. When it did break down, the Universal Church and the universal Empire were replaced by the national Church and the national State, and, imperfect as this too has proved to be in practice, in the minds of many it still holds the field, and in my view rightly so. Of course, as we all know, the Free Churches have broken away from the Establishment, and those who attend Church are but a small fraction of the nation, while those who communicate are a fraction still smaller. But still I hold that every Englishman who calls himself Christian is a member of the Church of England, and cannot, so long as the Church is established, divest

himself of that status. At the head of all is the Crown, which is a symbol, if you like, but a symbol which guarantees to each individual the rights of citizenship in the State and of membership in the Church. The Church indeed is the nation on its religious side, and is therefore, for that reason alone, justifiably established. It can enjoy large powers of self-government, as indeed it does, but it is in the end governed by Parliament, and its highest Court is the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. It may be argued that a member of Parliament may be a Roman Catholic, a Free Churchman, a Jew, or an infidel : the members of the Judicial Committee may not be professing Christians. But it is a wild extension of this argument to speak as if Parliament were a heathen assembly, and the Judicial Committee a court of infidels. They are the highest authority known to the State, and they guarantee the independence of the clergy and the freedom of the Church. On the day that the Church shakes itself finally free from this control, should it ever do so, it would cease to be national, and in a very short time it would cease to be comprehensive. It would be no more than a sect. In the days of the 'Life and Liberty' campaign one could not but be sympathetic with those who saw Parliament always too busy to attend to the pressing needs of the Church. But the Church Assembly has been brought into being, and the practical difficulty has been overcome. If however 'Life and Liberty' meant that the Church could never rest until she was finally free of all State control, then the Church being what she is, and Englishmen what they are, my view would have been that the greater wisdom lay with those who were content with 'Death and Slavery.' If this is Erastianism (though I do not believe that it is), I must confess to being an Erastian. It merely means that the Church, while entirely free to go about its own business and manage its proper affairs, is in the last resort, as a National Church, governed by the highest political wisdom and the most impartial judicial knowledge which the nation can make available. My first claim, then, is that the comprehensive Church should be national.

Having said this much, let us now turn and try to look the facts of the present world in the face. They surely present us with a perilous crisis, instant enough to shake into wakefulness all 'half-believers of our casual creeds' such as we English

Christians have so often been in the past, and so often still are. What do we really believe or profess to believe? And for what do we stand? We believe that we are the sons of God and the heirs of Eternal Life. We believe in Christ, that God was in Christ, reconciling mankind to Himself. We believe in the Holy Spirit, that this will make us living members of the Body of Christ, and that if our hearts are single, and our minds made ready, He will guide us into all Truth. We know that Christ has revealed God to us, and that we must think of Him as Life and as Love, and that our duty in this world is to love God and our neighbour as ourself. Our Lord preached a Way of Life, and the first Christians spoke of their faith as the Way. It set forth the paradox that worldly values are temporary and pass away, that we came into the world naked, and naked we shall go out, and that all the material things for which we strive, perish, while we fight for them, and can never bring abiding peace. Christ offered to us in their place the things of the Spirit, the values of Eternal Life. Let us sum them up as goodness, truth and beauty, and note, first, that they are the fruits, not of strife, but of fellowship, that they are increased by being shared, and that he who lives his life fully for these, and these alone, is already a citizen of the spiritual world, so that Christ's saying that 'He that hath Me hath eternal life' is no paradox but literal truth.

This is not a complete statement of the Christian Faith, of course, but it is a statement of the essentials, and I have said nothing, to the best of my belief, that cannot be accepted by Catholics and Protestants, Fundamentalists and Modernists. In all this we are at one, but we add human accretions of our own to separate us the one from the other, and now it is this view of the Sacraments as against that view of the Sacraments, and this view of Church government as against that view of Church government, and this view of the Bible as against that view of the Bible, that drive us into separate concentration camps, and reduce us as a practical force for saving the world to piecemeal futilities. This was of little importance, or so we thought, when all the world that seemed to matter called itself Christian, or seemed to do so. But what now? We are face to face with new and vigorous faiths which walk the world naked and unashamed.

There is the faith of Karl Marx, who taught years ago that the economic values alone are real, and that the Christian religion is a fairy tale, just so much dope handed out by the possessing classes to the workers. To say 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul' is sheer nonsense, since if a man gains the world he gains all that really matters, and he cannot lose his own soul, for it never existed. Men are animals like other animals: it is their nature to struggle and to take advantage; therefore men must be reduced by force to a dead level of equality without freedom, being like the early Christians in this respect alone, that they hold all things in common. This is not a wayward or extravagant creed which one is free to regard as unpractical, as mere theory. It has been imposed upon a large section of the world's population: it has virtually extirpated Christianity. It has worked by murder, persecution, and the instrument of famine. It would do the like by the whole world, were it strong enough. It shows no signs of weakening, and already there exists a generation of young men and young women who have been brought up in blinkers, and know nothing else.

Let us take Germany. No one, I suppose, will be at pains to deny that National Socialism is a vital faith which uses persecution and violence to achieve its ends. Some people in this country try to belittle the facts, and to argue that clergymen who interfere in politics are only there getting the treatment they deserve, and that Pastor Niemöller made a nuisance of himself. Pope Pius XI had perhaps better means of information, and he told the Cardinals on the Christmas Eve of 1937 that

'in Germany there is in fact religious persecution. For long they tried to make us believe that there was no persecution. We know however that there is a grievous persecution, and more even, that there has rarely been a persecution so serious, so fearful, so painful and so disastrous in its widespread effects.'

Let me quote again what you have already read in the last number of the *Modern Churchman*, the Memorandum presented by the Protestant Army Chaplains to Herr Hitler at much the same time as that in which the Pope broke silence. It is a passage taken from Principal Micklem's valuable book, *National Socialism and the Roman Catholic Church*:

'The new breach which divides the German nation,' said the Chaplains, 'is the breach between National Socialism and Christianity. . . .

The State and the party combat to-day not only the Churches. They combat Christianity. This fact is repeatedly denied. It is true, nevertheless. . . . In the training camp of the party it is repeatedly explained that National Socialism has three enemies: Judaism, Masonry, and Christianity. . . . The State itself is the object of the new ideology that combats the Christian faith. The racial ethic represented through the party and the police, armed with all the forces of the totalitarian State, hurls itself against materially helpless Christianity . . . worse than this ruthless use of material and military force is the spiritual violence suffered under State and military discipline. In Halle, a high functionary of the Storm Troops, speaking before assembled members of the organization, referred to Christ as "That Swine." School-teachers have repeatedly referred to Jesus in the classrooms as "that Jewish tramp."

I need not go on elaborating the issue. Is it not the case in Germany among the Nazis, in Italy among the Fascists, in Spain among the now dominant Falange, that those who believe that material values are alone real are as dominant and as unashamed as they are in Russia? The Roman Catholic Church may appear to hold a proud position in Italy and in Spain, but it is undermined. Those in power do not believe in truth, and they do not believe in goodness, and they do not believe in eternal life. They have utterly rejected Christ and Christianity, though as yet they may pretend otherwise. Look out to the East and see its swarming millions: what hold has Christianity there? We only see the same reign of violence and hideous cruelty, Japan advancing on its beneficent mission of civilizing China by blasting the fragments of the limbs of women and children against their shattered homes. Do we truly realize to what a small area of the world at the present moment the once conquering religion of Christianity has been driven back? Do we truly realize that these new forces, with all their diverse origins, are alike in this, that they see in Christianity, and still more in the Gospel of Christ, their greatest and most dangerous enemy? By persecution, by murder, if need be, by the concentration camp, by throttling education, they will extirpate it, if they can.

What one would have expected in the face of a situation of such menace is surely that a summons to resistance would have gone forth from the Heads of all the Christian Communion, and that the Vatican would have joined with Canterbury and with all the Free Churches to bear witness that the central citadel was in danger. We should have witnessed in hazy outline the lineaments of a truly comprehensive Church, the first beginnings of

a new order. But no clarion call is sounded from Rome, and our own Archbishop, though he has tried, can do no more than bid us pray. For the hard fact is that nationalism is everywhere stronger than Christianity: the latter, men honour with their lips, but the former sways their hearts. There are Christian Churches in Europe that dare not, and may not, pray openly even for peace: bound up in our nation states, and isolated from each other in mind and heart, we cannot reach out the hand of fellowship, and many have no desire within them to do so. When I read the *Report* of the Commission, and remember that it occupied many of the thinkers of our Church for fifteen years, from 1922 to 1937, and when I remember which way the world was going all this time, how Christianity was being persecuted and destroyed, I cannot at times suppress the thought of Nero fiddling when Rome was burning. There is much here of Transubstantiation, Consubstantiation, Receptionism, and Virtualism, much that doubtless shows good scholarship and good sense. But are these the things which really concern Christians, are these the things that rightly divide them, when there stalks unchecked in Europe and Asia the hideous gospel of Antichrist, that in the cause of the State it is right to lie, it is right to rob, and it is right to murder?

Forgive this outburst: 'out of the fullness of the heart the mouth speaketh.' It is obvious that the Church of Christ is at this moment reduced to futility and contempt, for no other reason than that it is so divided about questions which are comparatively unimportant that it is quite unable to combine in the one cause of supreme importance. This is a consideration which is entirely relative to my theme of a comprehensive Church; it shows its utter urgency, but having said it, the treatment of my immediate subject I can now resume.

I left it with the assertion that in the view which I favour the Church of England and the nation are co-terminous in the sense that I regard every Christian Englishman as a member of the Church. It is a view at any rate as old as Hooker, who wrote:

'There is not any man of the Church of England, but the same man is also a member of the commonwealth: nor any man a member of the commonwealth, which is not also of the Church of England.'

That being so, it is clear that the Church must be prepared to harbour within its bosom many varieties of theological outlook

and many diversities of religious experience. There are, to begin with, two great classes : one which in religion professes enthusiasm, the other which professes reason. Both have had their periods of great successes, and both their times of failure : the Church cannot dispense with either. Selden in his *Table Talk* once wrote :

‘Gentlemen have ever been more temperate in their religion than the common people, as having more reason—the others running in a hurry.’

We do not talk openly now about gentlemen and common people, and the distinction does not lie in difference of social position so much as in the difference of education. With the increasing spread of education, enthusiasm will tend to count for less and reason for more, but it must never be forgotten, particularly by ourselves, that reason in religion by itself is not enough. Enthusiasm has never dominated the Church, but from time to time it has profoundly leavened it in spite of the repressive policy of those in authority. This is not the place for a review of Church history, but from the time of Elizabeth onwards the Church has extruded movements and leaders, who have gone forth to prove that the Spirit was with them, and have proved it outside our ranks. The loss of the Quakers and the Wesleyans has not been entirely compensated by the fruitfulness of the Evangelical movement in good works. If the Church had known how to be more tolerant and more comprehensive, it would have been spiritually richer and morally stronger. This danger is not one entirely of the past, one which does not apply to the conditions of to-day, as we are all so ready to think. There is a very large number of social workers and reformers who spend all their leisure, and some all their lives, in helping the less fortunate and in improving the conditions of common life. But they are attached neither to the Church nor to any religious institutional body : it is a pity that the creeds of the Church are so set, and its foundations so narrow, its interests often so divorced from the real problems of human life, that such men are not, and do not think of being, in communion with her.

There are those in the nation who always will seek to follow reason, and who instinctively distrust the enthusiast and the extremist. They have produced in each century a fine flower of sanity, scholarship and calm ; but their danger has been that they

have also tended to produce indifference and sloth when times have been too comfortable. It is so easy to be cultured and intransigent, to be content with looking on at the human comedy, and enjoying it, to be a little blind to the human tragedy. But the pity is that those who might have stood with Erasmus or with Falkland, or with Bishop Butler, or with the best of the broad Churchmen of later days, now for the most part stand without the Church altogether. The same reason is operative again, that the Church in its formularies and in the freedom which it allows has failed to adjust itself to the advance of knowledge and the movements of men's thoughts. There is here a great sweetening influence of sanity and reasonableness which is lost from the Church, and might be a strengthening and stabilising factor.

There are those again, less critical, enthusiastic in another way, whose interest is to be loyal to an institution, who are caught by the glamour of history, and who stand fast for a Faith once for all delivered to the saints, and commit the guidance of their reason to Authority. The Oxford Movement was in large part the 'child of the Romantic Revival,' and it took a firm hold of the Church: it did not take, and never has taken, a firm hold of the nation. Newman, Pusey, Keble—these are great names but within a narrow field: they had great limitations. The main movements of thought of the nineteenth century were not influenced by them, and indeed they had dismissed reason and gone back to an idealist past. But they had charm, they had devotion, they had enthusiasm, and some of their successors, perhaps inspired by Manning, have been leaders in successful, because selfless, work in the struggle against social evil. They have set some noble and shining examples.

But Anglo-Catholicism has its dangers too. It is dangerous to look back, with vision intensely concentrated on the past, when the whole world is steering to an unknown future. For many it has the weakness of being an escape from reality, a means of getting out of the world. It trains its priests in seminaries, and is more responsible than any other movement for the separation which exists between the minds of the clergy and the minds of the laity, so that these neither think the same thoughts nor speak the same language. There is no reason in the nature

of things why this should be so. It is possible to reverence all that is best in the past, to feel the loyalties of the continuing generations of faithful Christians warm in the heart, to approach God with a worship which is as beautiful and moving as music and tradition can make it, without intolerance, without narrowness, and without belittling human reason and the growth of human knowledge through its exercise. There must always be those to whom the appeal of religion only comes forcibly when it is made through beauty of worship, and there must surely always be room in a comprehensive Church for those who are so moved. If they stand outside, it must be because they exclude themselves.

I have left to the last the two classes, of Fundamentalists and of Modernists, for whom I claim a place in the National Church, if they will tolerate each other. Fundamentalism is a human instinct with which we should be very patient; it is to be found in most sections which go to make up the Church. And no one, I think, can complain that the Church has failed to be very patient, or has sought too ardently to upset the faith of the old people. *Maxima debetur senibus reverentia* would seem to be the new version of the old tag which has been the motto for many modern pulpits. Fundamentalists are always decreasing in number, or rather, I should say, becoming less fundamental than they were. The number of those who believe literally without question in Garden of Eden, and the Ark, and the Last Trump and in Hell Fire is certainly much less than it was fifty years ago. But my point is that there will always be, at a given moment of time, many who in relation to the movement of thought and the state of knowledge at that point, are Fundamentalist. Human nature being what it is, we ought to be tolerant and do our best to persuade and to instruct. It is a pity that so often the intolerance lies on their side.

It is perhaps needless in this company and on this occasion for me to state that I claim for Modernists as important a place in the membership of the Church as can be claimed by any. I do not want to put forward Modernism as a party in the Church; it belongs to no party and belongs to all. There can be Modernist Anglo-Catholics, just as there can be Liberal Evangelicals. For it is a spirit, a method, an ideal. The Modernist follows

Reason, because Reason is of God : he observes the wonderful achievements wrought by Reason in other fields, and he believes that if it is fearlessly applied to religion also, it will be found potent to purify and to make clear; it will be the restorer of strength and simplicity. He accepts the Latin proverb *Magna est veritas, et praevalerebit*, and he is not troubled too much if new theories prove to be wrong or incomplete. He thinks himself and his own work to be as much subject to criticism as anything else, nor will he fail in the duty of self-criticism. For he knows that what is wrong will not stand, what is false cannot endure; and, believing by faith not unconfirmed by reason that the life and words of Jesus are the true Revelation of God, he advances boldly. The fire of criticism can consume everything but truth. What a Modernist was Jesus as compared with the Pharisees, and St. Paul as compared even with the Church of the Apostles at Jerusalem! Indeed, if I were asked for a passage in the Bible which would describe the problem of Modernism and its ideal, I should choose the words which St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians (I, iii, 11-13):

‘For other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble: every man’s work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire: and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.’

All men, and all sections of the Church, have the faults of their own virtues, and the fault of the Modernist is too often that he is an intellectualist, and only an intellectualist, in his approach to religion. He may be cold and one-sided, but Christianity is a Way of Life: it trains the emotions and it rules the will, work which cannot be done in and from the study. But he is not fairly to be called destructive because he is critical: all criticism which removes unsound foundations is constructive, and adds to the strength and permanence of the building. Nevertheless he cannot expect gratitude, or much sympathy, from established institutions and established beliefs: they will take up stones to stone him. He should not be discouraged: he should stay within the Church, for he can do far more to strengthen it by criticism from within than he can do by attacks from without. He must comfort himself with the reflection that it is possible, and even probable, that what he thinks to-day the

rest of the Church will be thinking to-morrow. His day, however, is a generation in length, and he may not live to see the results of his own constructive criticism.

There lie outside the Church to-day, as I have partly indicated already more than once, large masses who seldom come to church, and still larger numbers who never come at all. These need to have the gospel preached to them, but it must be a simple gospel, and it must not conflict with knowledge. It is not the intellectuals only who are without : it is the working classes in the broadest sense who do not find a Church which they can understand, or discover in the Church what they want, which is fellowship. The work of the Modernist is such as to show that Christianity is not contrary to reason and not adverse to knowledge : this can surely be shown, to whatever school of thought and practice the preacher or the teacher may happen to belong. But the work of all is to make fellowship more real. I have for the past five years been concerned in the exercise of College patronage, and have to consult Parochial Church Councils on each occasion to find out from them what manner of man they want. We have had answers from Dorset in the South to Yorkshire in the North, from country and town alike. And always the answer has been so similar that they might have copied from one another. They want a man who is not an extremist, and carries no party label : they want a man who will visit them, and is ready to be friendly : they want a man who will take an interest in the young, since the young are out of hand. Is not this a sign that we want new bottles in which to put the new wine for this generation? Not new foundations only but a new spirit? There will not be a real National Church till these things change. It surely concerns all of us that there is needed not only greater intellectual freedom, but more fellowship and greater goodwill. We are too content with the life of the Church as we know it. We recite in the Creed the clause that we believe in the Holy Catholic Church, but many of us regard it as a pattern laid up in the heavens, and are content to leave it there. There is an acute analysis in the article which the present Archbishop of York wrote for the composite book called *Foundations*, published before the war, in which he tabulates the causes of the failure of the Church. It is, he says, a Christian Church whose

members are also members of an almost pagan society, and it cannot be more than a limited distance ahead of the society in which its members live. 'The early Church tolerated slavery: the contemporary Church tolerates sweating'—two judgements which seem to me to be hard sayings, not altogether justified.

'We worship money, and cannot forget self.' And again,

'We go to church in families, and sit in our own pews: we say our own prayer and pay our respects to our own God: and then we come out again and go to our own homes, to eat our own luncheons and our own suppers. We do not concern ourselves with the people in the next pew, unless they sing out of tune.'

There may be overstatement here, but it is in the main true, and I mention it because I think that there is a tendency, especially among the clergy, just because they have in their heads a mythical ideal of the Church, which in the words of the *Epistle to the Ephesians* (i, 23) is 'Christ's body, the fulness of Him who all in all is being fulfilled,' to be too tolerant of the manifold weaknesses and imperfections of Christ's Church militant here on earth. That Church must fail to win souls unless it is manifestly striving towards its ideal, and not resting in content because the ideal is in any case unattainable.

I have dwelt upon this because I feel that the Church needs a higher standard of fellowship as much as it needs more intellectual freedom. But the second need is real and great, and I agree with the writer of the 'Signs of the Times' in the July number of *The Modern Churchman* that we need

'(1) a body of clergymen who are competently trained teachers of religion, and (2) absolute intellectual freedom for them in the exercise of their teaching office.'

I cannot forget that 8,206 clergymen welcomed the issue of the Doctrinal Report by protesting against its acceptance by the Church Authorities, by declaring that the Church of England holds and teaches the Nicene Creed in that sense only in which it has ever been held throughout the history of the Church, and by asserting that

'the Church's ministers cannot rightly claim a liberty to set aside by private interpretation the historic meaning of those clauses which state the events of the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

I think it probable that only a small percentage of the 8,206 had purchased or borrowed, and also read, the Doctrinal Report, but that there are over eight thousand who are anxious to hug their

chains, and mean to win the new world by asserting the unalterability of the past, fills me, I confess, with foreboding. We cannot man the ministry of a comprehensive Church with men of that type of mind. But the attack is not so formidable as it looks, and the state of mind of the signatories is probably not so intransigent as it seems. The Doctrinal Report stands, and it has been accepted by the Upper Houses of Convocation: it is the Charter of doctrinal freedom for which English Modernists have stood, and should be a great encouragement to them to continue to use the same honesty, the same freedom, and the same reverence which they have claimed in the past, and on the whole have not misused.

It will have been obvious that in putting before you these incomplete thoughts about the ideal of a comprehensive Church I have been thinking of a National Church, and of the Church of England in particular. This is, I think, natural and reasonable because this is the stage at which we stand. The world is divided out among nation states, and we are all members of the Church of England and citizens of the British Empire. But in thinking of the comprehensive Church my own mind does not rest there, even if a National Church is all that we can usefully work at and strive for now. We must not go too fast, as it seems to me that some of those who work for reunion and a federation of faiths are inclined to do to-day. We ought to be warned by the failure of the League of Nations. That was an artificial federation of the world, put together and planned and endowed, from above and outside, with a constitution. It was started with high hopes, but it was incomplete, and it neglected the fact that its members had not the same political faith, or outlook, or ideals. The divergencies which were buried beneath the surface came more and more into sight as the years passed, and they naturally widened. And the result was failure. I do not believe that the nations can be combined except upon the basis of some real identity of political belief and political ideals, and I hold that the next stage, if progress is to be made, must lie in the combination of all the democracies. That, if it could come about, would be a definite step towards super-national control. For though we may never evolve such a dream as a United States of the World, we must somehow win our way to a reign

of international law and a measure of control of individual nations by agreement. I give this as a parallel as to what might happen on the side of the Churches, if we are to move similarly from the present stage of the national churches to some wider communion. Here too we may say that the Christian world is divided between the authoritarian and the Free Churches, and there is no common basis upon which we could enter into communion with Rome save that of surrender. But if we can first build up in this country a comprehensive national church such as I have tried to portray, and find room within it for many diverse points of view which can yet tolerate and respect one another, then we could enter into relation with other churches and communions of similar points of view, and so build up a world-wide federation which might exercise a strong influence on the future of civilization. Reunion, and inter-communion, if they are not based upon real sympathy and a similar method of approach to the Eternal, must be an artificial sham and could not endure for a generation. These considerations of a far future have not escaped the notice of the members of the Doctrinal Commission. You will find the statement on page 126 of the *Report*:

‘With regard to the Church of the future, some of us look forward to a reunion of Christendom having its centre in a Papacy which had renounced certain of its present claims: some, on the other hand, look forward to union by a more federal type of constitution which would have no need for such a Primacy.’

As things are, I place myself without hesitation among those who take the latter view. Much water must flow under many bridges before Rome renounces any of her claims, and she would cease to be Rome if she did. The hour of mortal danger and instant persecution may work rapid change in the hearts of men, and no one would be so rash as to dogmatize about a future which no one can foresee. But a Primacy of any kind seems to me to carry with it the idea of a uniformity which it is neither possible nor desirable to secure. Christ fulfils Himself in many ways and in many nations, and each must work out the Way in sincerity and truth. Just as on the far horizon there may be a United States of the World, or something like it, so there may be not less dimly descried a United Churches of the World. And then there may return to humanity, enlarged and ennobled,

the old imperfect ideal of the Middle Ages, and Church and Empire in their new form guide the material and spiritual well-being of a world.

But for the present we must concentrate our endeavours on making our national Church tolerant and comprehensive, enlightened and free.

May I end with two quotations of an eloquence which I cannot command, which enshrine ideals which I hope we may all fully share. The one passage is from that excellent book *The Genius of the English Church* by Alfred Fawkes, whose learning and wit many of us miss so much from these gatherings :

‘Institutions, like the Sabbath, were made for men : and the city of vision has twelve gates. Some will enter it most easily from the silence of the Friends’ Meeting : others from the joyful noise of the Salvationists : some from the dignified repose of an English Cathedral service : some from the incense-laden atmosphere of the basilica. Does it matter, so long as they enter, *how* they enter? The one is a temper, the other is a regulation. And the unity which Christ prayed for His followers is not an artificial identity of formula or usage imposed by terrorism, and maintained by fear or custom : it is something on another plane and of a higher order—the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.’

And the other is in words of still more glowing eloquence from the pen of Burke, that vision of the National Church which he set forth in his speech on the petition of the Unitarians :

‘If you think it to be an invaluable blessing, a way fully sufficient to nourish a manly, rational, solid and, at the same time, humble piety : if you find it well-fitted to the frame and pattern of your civil constitution : if you find it a barrier against fanaticism, infidelity and atheism : if you find that it furnishes support to the human mind in the afflictions and distresses of the world, consolation in sickness, pain, poverty and death : if it dignifies our nature with the hope of immortality, leaves enquiry free, while it preserves an authority to teach, where authority only can teach, *communia altaria, aequae ac patriam, diligite, colite, fovete.*’

THE PURPOSE, SCOPE AND PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DOCTRINAL REPORT

By the Rev. T. J. WOOD, M.A., Organizing Secretary of the Modern Churchmen's Union, Vicar of St. John's, Clapham.

(I) PURPOSE OF THE *Report*.

THE purpose of the *Doctrinal Report* as defined by the reference to the Commission was as follows :

‘To consider the nature and grounds of Christian doctrine with a view to demonstrating the extent of existing agreement within the Church of England and with a view to investigating how far it is possible to remove or diminish existing differences.’

Whether the Report fulfils this purpose is a matter for subsequent discussion, but even these terms need some examination in the light of events which caused the Commission to be appointed.

The controversy between conservative and progressive thought had become heated and often bitter since the beginning of the twentieth century. It had begun in the middle of the nineteenth century, with the rise of modern science, and the development of Biblical and historical criticism. The critical, not to say sceptical, spirit of the modern world had attacked the foundations of religion, which, step by step had retreated before the advance of knowledge and scientific method. The principle landmarks in that contest are worth recalling, because they indicate the particular position from which the Commissioners had to begin.

The first attempt to reconcile the Christian faith with modern science and to re-interpret the Bible in the light of modern criticism was made by the writers in *Essays and Reviews*, 1860. It ventured in both fields, but the ensuing controversy was limited to that of the Bible. This was due to the fact that Prof. Baden Powell (the father of the founder of the Scout Movement), who had ventured to deal with miracle on modern lines, died shortly after the publication of the book. Had he lived he would undoubtedly have been prosecuted for heresy. The brunt

of the attack then fell upon Rowland Williams, whose article criticized the historical accuracy of the Bible, and discounted the value of prophecy. He was condemned in the Court of Arches, but this decision was reversed by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, and thus the basis of the freedom of Biblical criticism was laid. But the Church authorities did not recognize the judgment, and Bishop Colenso discovered how heavy could still be the consequences of espousing the new criticism. This reluctant and grudging concession of religious authorities to growing knowledge has been the most unfortunate feature in the history of religion during the last century.

‘All our hopes for eternity, the very foundations of our faith, our nearest and dearest consolations, are taken from us, if one line of that Sacred Book be declared unfaithful or untrustworthy.’

So said the Bishops in 1865, and this attitude of mind, exalted into fanatic Bibliolatry in some circles, prevented that synthesis between ancient religious truth and modern knowledge which is so essential to the preservation of the Christian faith. *Essays and Reviews* won the legal battle, but it had not overcome the conservatism of the Church.

Once the right of Biblical criticism was granted, the next question was concerned with its application to the Gospels. Those who might be prepared to admit that Moses did not know the exact truth about the creation could not reconcile themselves to admit that the Gospels, the words of Jesus Himself, might be subject to the same doubt. Yet this was the assertion of *Lux Mundi*, 1890; the limitation of knowledge applied to Jesus Himself. Certainty, infallibility, could not be found even in the Gospels themselves. The whole religious edifice which had stood upon a verbally-inspired Bible seemed in danger of collapse; where could the believer find firm ground?

The opposition to the modernizing of Christianity took courage from the condemnation of Modernism by Pope Pius X in 1907, but the Roman Catholic form of modernism was something quite different from English modernism. Roman Catholic modernism was not primarily concerned with the historic origins of the Christian religion; English modernism would establish Christianity firmly in history, but would insist that it must be true history.

In 1912, a number of Oxford men set themselves to re-interpret the Christian faith 'in the light of the knowledge and thought of the day.' They called their book *Foundations*, because modern knowledge had touched 'the foundations of old beliefs, and it was about the foundations that the world is asking' (*Foundations*, p. x). The battle for liberalism in the interpretation of the Bible was past, the consequent problems of the Creeds took the foreground, and, naturally, first to be raised were those of the meaning and authority to be attached to the historical clauses. As the opponents of Biblical criticism had once said, 'You may apply your methods to the Old Testament, but hands off the New,' so now the opponents of modernism cried, 'Hands off the Creeds!' Convocation stood firm. In 1905 and 1914, it announced its determination to maintain unimpaired the Catholic Faith, as contained in the Creeds. This Faith 'both in statements of doctrine and in statements of fact' was asserted to be 'the necessary basis on which the teaching of the Church reposes.'¹

Then came the Great War, with its searching test of Christian morals, and in the middle of it the storm raised by the elevation of Dr. Henson to the Episcopate. When the War was over the need for doctrinal re-statement was urgent, and the question was urged upon Archbishop Davidson by Bishop Burge, who had been in conference with a group of younger theologians 'weary of disputes' and 'anxious to find a basis of agreement with other elements in the English Church.'²

This group asked for the appointment of a Doctrinal Commission. The reaction of the Archbishop was cautious and typical. He foresaw that the Commission was bound to be given implicitly a kind of *ex cathedra* authority, and that it would be better if it were quite unofficial.

It is interesting for us here (at Girton, 1939) to remember that it was the Modern Churchmen's Conference held at Girton, 1921, which led to the Commission being appointed. That Conference carried the critical process one step further; for if the writings of the New Testament are open to examination and

¹ *The Bishops and Modern Criticism*, p. 57.

² *Randall Davidson*, G. K. A. Bell, vol. ii, p. 1, 137.

criticism, not only does the authority of the historical clauses of the Creeds cease to be final and infallible, but the whole doctrine of the Incarnation comes under review. That Conference, in short, was the logical culmination in the process of modern criticism, the effort to reconcile the Christian faith with the conclusions of science, Biblical study and historical knowledge. The very ark of the faith, the deity of Jesus, was not sacrosanct but open to examination and reformulation.

Many here will remember the controversy which ensued, and the lamentable attack upon Dean Hastings Rashdall by Bishop Gore, and the appeals to Convocation which followed. The resolution of Convocation (2nd May, 1922) declared

‘its conviction that adhesion to the teaching of the Catholic Church as set forth in the “Nicene” Creed—and in particular concerning the eternal pre-existence of the Son of God, His true Godhead, and His Incarnation—is essential to the life of the Church, and calls attention to the fact that the Church commissions as its Ministers those only who have solemnly expressed such adhesion.’

At the same time it defended reverent criticism, and deprecated blunt denunciations of scholars. It will be noted that the insistence upon statements of fact in the Creeds has dropped out. The Northern House went more into detail and stated that :

‘We have to take into account the fact that the advance of science and criticism has forced upon the Church the necessity of reviewing the traditional theology, with the object of disentangling the unalterable faith from whatever in its setting may be discovered to be obsolete or misleading, and restating it in terms more congruous with our present knowledge, and for that reason more intelligible and edifying to modern Christians.’

The constant reiteration of the affirmation of the Creeds, coupled with the acknowledgment of the necessity of restatement, was just what the plan for a Doctrinal Commission was intended to avoid, and at last Archbishop Davidson gave way, and the Commission was appointed.

This preamble may seem long, but it is necessary in order to set the purpose of the Commission against its historical background. The Commission was appointed with the following reference :

‘To consider the nature and grounds of Christian Doctrine with a view to demonstrating the extent of existing agreement within the Church of England and with a view to investigating how far it is possible to remove or diminish existing differences.’

The complaint has often been made that the Commission included no representatives of extreme Anglo-Catholicism or extreme Evangelicalism, but the circumstances of its appointment precluded them. Since the purpose of the Commission was to find a basis of agreement between modern criticism and ancient faith, it was obvious that nobody could usefully serve on it who repudiated both the method and the results of modern criticism. Fundamentalists, of both kinds, were therefore excluded. Father A. G. Hebert has published a Memorandum, on the Report of the Commission at the request of the Theological Committee of the Church Union, which has also given it its *imprimatur*. He finds fault with the Commission because it did not go to the root of the differences, which derive from 'two radically different views of Revelation' (Memorandum, p. 45), and he criticizes the statement of the Commissioners 'that their attitude to "whatever is offered for their acceptance" is to "exercise judgment upon it, whatever the source from which it is derived."' Fr. Hebert's comment on this is :

'This appears to come perilously near to sitting in judgment on the Revelation of God itself, and on the faith into which we have been baptized' (Memorandum, p. 25, footnote).

It is precisely this attitude of mind which was repudiated by the appointment of the Commission. The view that there is a body of Revelation which is given to us and which is beyond examination and not subject to criticism is the antithesis of modernism, and whatever we may think of other points made in Fr. Hebert's Memorandum (which we must remember has the backing of the Church Union) we must absolutely deny its fundamental assumption.

It was Bishop Joseph Butler, no mean Christian theologian, who wrote :

'Reason is the candle of the Lord with us, and that by which we must judge even of Revelation itself.'

(2) SCOPE OF THE *Report*.

The Archbishop of York, in the Introduction to the *Report* (p. 4), draws attention to the limitation in its scope. It was to deal with

'those subjects (on the whole) . . . which are . . . or have been . . . occasions of controversy within the Church of England or sources of confusion in Anglican practice.'

There never was any idea that the Commission should produce a compendium of theology, a modern *Summa Theologiae* for the Church of England; that task cannot be undertaken until the effect of modern criticism has been worked out, and it is questionable whether it will then be possible except in terms of a generally accepted philosophy (such as underlay the work of St. Thomas), which shows no signs of appearing above the horizon. The task of the Commission was much more limited, it was to demonstrate 'the extent of the existing agreement,' and to investigate 'how far it is possible to remove or diminish existing differences.' The first part seems to have been easy of accomplishment, and its importance must not be underestimated. Even Fr. Hebert regards the *Report* as 'a monument of orthodoxy.'

Neither was the *Report* intended to be a popular defence of the Christian faith. Since it was to deal with the current controversies in the Church it made its appeal necessarily to those who were interested in those controversies and understood something of their nature and the issues involved.

'This accounts for, and as we hope justifies, the rather detached and academic quality of our work' (Introduction, p. 7).

This also explains why so much of the *Report* deals with the Church and its Ministry, since this is one of the crucial questions involved in the problem of Re-union which has been in the air since the last war. It also accounts for the prominence of the question of the Sacrament of Holy Communion, which was the underlying issue at the time of the revision of the Prayer Book, and which materially affects the practical question of the control of extra-liturgical services in relation to the Reserved Sacrament.

These sections of the *Report* have not received the same attention as those dealing with the obvious and popular subjects of the Virgin Birth and the Physical Resurrection of Jesus, where the statements of the *Report* have come under the strictures of half the clergy of the Church of England; but their implications for the re-union movement on the one hand and for the control of 'Devotions' on the other will, we may hope, receive effective consideration when those matters again come to the front.

(3) PRACTICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE *Report*.

As has been said above, the main reason why Archbishop Davidson at first opposed the appointment of a Commission was that he feared that its official recognition would confer upon it 'a rather doubtful and fallacious authority' (Letter to Bp. Burge, Sept. 1921); and he was especially sceptical of the wisdom of endowing the report of any Commission with the authority of 'an expression of the Church's official teaching,' as was originally proposed. In the end the appointment of the Commission was subject to the conditions that its Report 'should not be an authoritative statement, but that it should, when prepared, be laid before the Bishops for them to consider what further action (if any) should be taken.' These conditions were doomed to be nullified.

It must be perfectly obvious that a document produced by a Commission appointed by the Archbishops which included the present Archbishop of York and a large number of distinguished English theologians, representing different schools of thought, but all of them leaning towards the liberal interpretation of doctrine, could not but be an epoch-making event, and was bound to be regarded as in some measure authoritative. Modernists have every reason to be grateful for the result, though it would be unduly optimistic to suggest that the task of the Modern Churchmen's Union was finished.

Let us consider briefly what the *Report* has accomplished :

(1) It has established the right of the modern critical approach to the Bible.

(2) It has recognized the right of the same method to deal with the Creeds, both their historical and their doctrinal clauses.

(3) It has made 'respectable' the symbolic interpretation of the Creeds, and has refused to draw the line between those clauses which may be taken symbolically and those which must be interpreted literally. This is a complete departure from the position of Bishop Gore so popular in 'Central' and Anglo-Catholic sections of the English Church.

(4) It has repudiated any final and infallible standard of authority, whether in Bible, Church, or Creed.

We have only to compare these concessions to liberal thought with the position taken up by Convocation in 1914 to see how far the tide of theology has moved in the interim. Those to whom these conclusions are unwelcome have endeavoured to minimize their consequences by reiterating the futile suggestion that the *Report* has no *official* authority; that is irrelevant. As the Bishop of Derby has said :

‘The resulting document, whatever its formal status (whether at the present time or hereafter) is one which it would be quite impossible for either the Church of England or the Anglican Communion to repudiate in future; and it must be expected to bear its chief fruit in the next generation.’³

Protests that the *Report* was not, as intended, submitted to the Bishops before publication, have a totalitarian flavour; they suggest that if the Bishops had had the opportunity of examining the *Report* before its publication they would have suppressed it in horror.

But since publication robbed these inquisitors of the opportunity of stifling this child of liberal thought at its birth, the argument against it has generally taken one of two lines.

The first is that of dismissing the *Report* as out-of-date. This is one of the arguments put forward by Fr. Hebert (Memorandum, p. 9), and he quotes the Introduction, where the Archbishop says :

‘If we began our work again to-day, its perspectives would be different.’

It is true that the world of to-day, in so far as it is concerned with Christianity at all, is concerned with its practical application to present conditions. The rising generation, we are told, is not interested in out-of-date questions of Biblical criticism, with the possibility of miracles; it is interested in the social interpretation of Christian ideals, and in the practical problems of Christian ethics. John Macmurray and Reinhold Niebuhr are its prophets.

There is great truth in these statements, but they do not imply that the settlement of the old problems put forward in the *Report* is out-of-date. On the contrary, if the rising generation finds some of the questions dealt with in the *Report* irrelevant to-day it is because it has already put the conservative

³ Article in *Church Assembly News*, April, 1938, p. 85.

solution on the shelf and accepted the Modernist one as the only rational and tolerable position.

Side by side with this depreciation of the results of the Commission's work is the view that it represents the last effort of immanentism, which is now a spent force, yielding place to a resurgent transcendentalism. We are all aware that liberalism is passing under a cloud. Its optimistic estimate of human nature has scarcely survived the last war, and will certainly not outlast the next; its characteristic tolerance seems alien in a world where new totalitarian states are born every year. We have learned how little human reason determines human action, and so great is the despair of man's power to help himself, that a theology of crisis seems to many the only ray of hope. The measure of that despair is the irrationality of Barthianism. Is the only hope of the survival of Christianity that it should divorce itself from reason and freedom and become itself authoritarian and intolerant? That is the problem before the Church to-day; it is quite true that the *Report* does not deal with it.

The progressive steps in the recognition of the rights of liberal theology have already been pointed out. The milestones along the road are *Essays and Reviews* (1860), *Lux Mundi* (1890), *Foundations* (1912), the *Doctrinal Report* (1938). It will be noticed that the gap between each roughly represents a generation. Is there another step beyond, or does the series come to an end and a new one begin? This is the crucial question in the world at large to-day.

But even 'if the security of the nineteenth century, already shattered in Europe, finally crumbles away in our country,' and we are 'pressed more and more towards a theology of Redemption,' as the Archbishop of York suggests in the Introduction (p. 17), that theology will never be able to go back behind the position which liberal theology has now established for itself. We refuse to believe that even the twilight of civilization itself will mean the total eclipse of liberal religious thought. If Christianity survives at all it will be liberal Christianity. As Dr. C. C. J. Webb has said:

'A thoroughly Christian view of the world cannot afford to compromise its fundamental monotheism by allowing that there is any

reality in which God is *not* immanent and which, in the last resort, can claim to exist independently of his immanence therein.⁴

Although Dr. Webb believes that the immanentist period of theology is coming to an end and that transcendentalism is coming in, yet he regards as one of the permanent gains of immanentism 'the elimination from religion of that character of sheer arbitrariness which has so often been attributed to it by friend and foe alike.'⁵

It is the elimination of this element of sheer arbitrariness which is one of the chief achievements of the *Doctrinal Report*; it is expressed in the refusal of the Commission to recognize the inerrancy of the Bible (p. 29), in the claims for the genuine freedom of the consensus upon which rests, at least in part, the authority of the Church's formulas. It is found in the correlation of revelation and discovery and the refusal to split the body of Christian doctrine into two portions assignable to those two factors (p. 44), and in the claim that 'no formulations' of Revelation in propositions 'are to be regarded as being, in principle, irreformable' (pp. 79-80).

Here is jettisoned finally and completely that view of Revelation which makes it something beyond the reason of man, something to be accepted without question or criticism as 'given' by God.

But we should err greatly if we were to imagine that the battle has been won, and that liberals have nothing more to do than to rest back and enjoy the fruits of their victory. The fact that over 8,000 clergy (nearly one-half) of the Church of England signed the petition to Convocation against the *Report* reminds us how much of the field remains unoccupied, how much conservative prejudice has yet to be overcome. There may be no cause to fear a frontal attack upon the liberal view of the Creeds; the refusal of the Upper House of Convocation in January, 1939, to endorse the Resolution⁶ sent up by a meagre

⁴ *English Religious Thought Since 1850*, C. C. J. Webb, p. 166.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 164.

⁶ The Resolution was as follows: 'That the Church of England holds and teaches the Nicene Creed in that sense only in which it has been held throughout the history of the Church, and her ministers cannot rightly claim a liberty to set aside by private interpretation the historic meaning of those clauses which state the events of the Incarnate Life of our Lord Jesus Christ.'

Lower House will discourage further attempts to put the theological clock back. But the pertinacity of the petitioners was not quenched by the Upper House; they pursued the Archbishops into the fastness of Lambeth and there wrung from them at last that condemnation of the negative results of modern criticism which they had been unable to evoke from Convocation. It is customary in official utterances to acknowledge the rights and duties of scholars and critics in their task of research, and then to put the sting in the tail and assert that if his researches lead any scholar to the conclusion that a supposed historical fact stated in the Creeds is not historical, then he must not officially proclaim this conclusion, for 'the denial of any of the historical facts in the Creeds goes beyond the limits of legitimate interpretation' (Resolution of Convocation, 29th April, 1914).

It was gratifying to notice that any such kind of Parthian shot was absent in the resolution in which Convocation (June 1st, 1938) welcomed the *Doctrinal Report* and commended it to the study of the Church, and the attempt to secure one was defeated again in January, 1939. The Archbishops have now themselves, even though unofficially, as they say, returned to the attitude of Convocation in 1914.

' . . . if such an ordained minister felt obliged in his public or official teaching to express his definite denial of the historical facts stated in the Creeds, this would be inconsistent with his responsibility as an authorized teacher in the Church.'⁷

Let us examine the effect of this utterance in relation to the *Doctrinal Report* on one question, the Ascension. There is not the slightest doubt that up till quite recently the Ascension was regarded as one of 'the historical facts stated in the Creeds,' and fundamental in importance.

Now the *Report* takes a very liberal standpoint on the Ascension. It states explicitly that :

'Whatever may have been the nature of the event underlying those narratives (of the Ascension), and whatever its relation to the Resurrection, its physical features are to be interpreted symbolically, since they are closely related to the conception of heaven as a place locally fixed beyond the sky' (p. 89).

No diversity of opinion among the Commissioners on the point is mentioned, neither does the Chairman, the Archbishop of York,

⁷ Letter of Archbishop of Canterbury to Fr. O'Brien, 3rd June, 1939.

dissociate himself from the utterance. Notice that the physical features *are to be* (not *may be*) interpreted symbolically. If then, the Ascension is to be interpreted symbolically it is not one of 'the historical facts stated in the Creeds.' But such a conclusion would have been repudiated by Bishop Gore, and in view of the ambiguity on this point it would not be inappropriate to ask the Archbishops for a definition of those clauses of the Creeds which are to be regarded as undeniable historical facts, and whether the assertion that there are such is consistent with the view of the *Report* that no clear line of demarcation can be drawn between the historical and symbolical elements in the Creeds.

'The general acceptance of formulations drawn up in another age and another context of thought gives rise to special problems, especially when some of the phrases used are indisputably symbolic, and no clear distinction is drawn, or (perhaps) can be drawn, between these and others' (p. 37).

'It does not appear possible to delimit with finality or precision the extent to which symbolic elements of this latter kind (i.e., true "pictorially," "even though the supposed facts themselves did not actually happen") may enter into the historic tradition of the Christian faith' (p. 38).

We must beware of attempts to minimise the results of the *Report*, and to undermine its authority. We must claim the full measure of liberty which it envisages in the interpretation of doctrine. Finally, we cannot but rejoice that a document so liberal in its interpretation and so tolerant in its spirit should have been produced by a representative body of learned and responsible theologians of the Church of England in our generation. It surely presages an ideal of doctrinal and liturgical comprehensiveness; from its Pisgah height we may discern the Promised Land of unity and freedom. May it be given to our children to enter it.

DOCTRINAL LATITUDE IN HISTORY

By the Very Rev. W. R. INGE, D.D., F.B.A.

IF medicine had been regulated four hundred years ago by Act of Parliament; if there had been Thirty-nine Articles of Physic, and every licensed practitioner had been compelled under pains and penalties to compound his drugs by the prescriptions of Henry the Eighth's physician Dr. Butt, it is easy to conjecture in what state of health the people of this country would at present be found! Some of you will remember this quotation from Froude. It is a strange state of things, and of course the fixation of dogma began long before the Reformation.

Matter, as we know, exists in three states—the solid, the liquid, and the gaseous. We might classify literary style in the same way. The solid is only for professors writing for or at each other. The liquid is appropriate for ordinary purposes. The gaseous is acquired by politicians, preachers, and journalists. Religions are liable to change from one state to another. At first Christian doctrine was fluid, a river receiving tributaries on both banks, now foaming through rapids, now meandering through a peaceful plain, but growing in volume and enriched by every lap of its course. Then we see it beginning to freeze and evaporate—the two changes may be simultaneous, and it loses its mobility either in a glacier or in a salt lake with no outlet.

It is because we do not believe that the fresh springs in which the river of Christianity rose are dried up, but are as pure and vigorous as ever in their life-giving power, that we revolt against the fate which threatens to congeal our religion, and wish to restore it to that freedom, that liberty to change, which always and everywhere distinguishes the living from the dead.

I have been asked to treat the subject from the historical side—'doctrinal latitude in history.' I shall have no difficulty in showing that doctrine has not always been frozen.

Dogma and theology are in perpetual uncertainty what they owe to each other, and what they have to hope and fear from each other. Few theologians have not shaken some traditional

dogma. And yet dogma always claims to be not a product but a criterion of theology. Dogma always eliminates the process of thought which led to its own formulation, and claims to be a revelation of absolute truth. It is intensely tenacious, fortifying itself by the sanctifying power of blind custom. It is the nature of religion to harden into cult, of philosophy to soften into culture.

I am not one of those who think that any stigma is good enough to beat a dogma. A dogma is only an authoritative decision that a certain debate is now closed. Sometimes it was high time to close the debate, as for example after the long disputes about the Person of Christ. The Arian controversy was real and important; but the wranglings with Monophysites and Monothelites had gone on long enough. Nevertheless, the claim of finality which dogma makes is an implicit admission that the inspiration of the Church has come to an end, and that no further revelation of truth is to be looked for.

The result is that dogma has stereotyped and petrified an antique mode of thought. In the dark ages 'back to antiquity' was the right policy, until the partial restoration of social and political order made intellectual progress once more possible. But the attempt to stereotype and petrify theology as it was left by that very great man St. Thomas Aquinas has led to an increasing divergence between sacred and profane learning. In the fourth century and in the thirteenth, the Church was abreast of the science and the philosophy of the age. It has never been so since. At present there is a growing severance between institutional and spiritual Christianity. The religion of authority seems to many to encumber the free development of a faith which believes itself to be more genuinely Christian because it looks to the present and the future, and not only to the past, for inspiration. The assumption that what is new cannot be true sounds to us like a denial of the present activity of the Holy Spirit in the minds of men. It is, however, the criterion of orthodoxy formally adopted by the Roman Church. There is, according to the Vatican Council of 1870,

'a supernatural revelation, according to the faith of the universal Church declared by the Holy Council of Trent, contained in the written books and unwritten traditions received from the mouth of Christ Him-

self, or which, dictated by the Holy Ghost to the Apostles themselves, have been handed down, so to speak, hand by hand, and have come down to us.'

No doubt the dogma of the infallibility of the Pope might be used to change other dogmas, as Pio Nono perceived when he said 'La tradizione, sono Io.' In this way the Roman Church is in a better position than our High Anglicans, who hold that infallible guidance belongs only to a General Council of the whole Church, *i.e.* of all Churches which enjoy the privilege of the Apostolical Succession; and obviously such a Council can never meet. It is much as if no Act of Parliament were valid until it had been carried at a joint session of the House of Commons and the American Congress. But the comparative freedom of the Roman Church is much more apparent than real. In that Church Modernism as such is and must remain a compendium of all the heresies. Catholic education, as Newman said in one of his outbursts of imprudent candour, consists in 'pouring truth into the mind and sealing it up in perpetuity.'

That Christian doctrine was at first in a fluid state is evident to every intelligent reader of the New Testament. The faith which at last conquered the Roman Empire was a syncretism of Jewish and Greek ideas, and though this combination was its great strength, Hebraism and Hellenism mix no better than oil and water. When the Gospel was brought into the Graeco-Roman world, it passed through the greatest crisis in its history.

Two points may be emphasized. The doctrine of the Person of Christ in the New Testament is in process of change from apotheosis to incarnation, and reaches its goal only in the Fourth Gospel. Some of the speeches in the early part of the Acts represent a very primitive Christology. St. Paul quite clearly teaches that though the pre-existent heavenly Christ was 'in the form of God,' He was not 'equal with God' till after His passion and resurrection. This accession of dignity was given Him as a reward. 'Therefore God hath highly exalted Him.' But in his later Epistles he expounds a doctrine of Christ as a cosmic Power, present in the world as a spiritual activity even before the Incarnation. Only the name 'Logos' is needed to establish this doctrine, which does not belong to the original Gospel. Together with this idea of Christ as 'the heavenly man,' St.

Paul believes, as the very core of his personal religion, that the spiritual Christ is actually present in the hearts of all Christians, except they be 'reprobates.' This spiritual presence, as a fact here and now, pushes into the background the apocalyptic dreams of the first Christian Messianists. The return, the Parousia, of Christ, was really actualized in the gift of the Holy Spirit, who is Jesus Himself under another form. The historical Jesus is more and more invested with the attributes of the glorified Christ, as we see in the Fourth Gospel.

All through the New Testament, and in the early centuries of Church history, we can trace the accumulation of honorific tributes to Christ, until he becomes *θεός*, though not *ὁ θεός*. The word *θεός*, however, is not identical with what we mean by God. The Greek Fathers could say, 'He was made man in order that we might be made God,' without fear of irreverence, and Clement of Alexandria even says *ἡ ψυχὴ μελετᾷ εἶναι θεός*.

Among other doctrines which were acceptable as raising Jesus above ordinary humanity was that of the virgin birth, which cannot be proved to have been held by St. Paul, and which seems to be excluded by the two genealogies in Matthew and Luke. It may have been helped by a misunderstood prophecy (Isaiah vii, 14), but was very acceptable to many Gentile converts, and certainly established itself very early. It may be alluded to in the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel, if we read, with good authority, 'who *was* born' for 'who were born.'

The other important point in which early Christian teaching was fluctuating and uncertain was eschatology. Here what we may call the Hebraic and the Hellenic ideas have been in conflict even to our day. Our Lord Himself revealed nothing about the future life except in parables, and was content to use the traditional language about Paradise and Gehenna; but He seems not to have checked His disciples in their belief that their Master was here on earth as the Messiah-designate, and would shortly return on the clouds of heaven and inaugurate a reign of the saints on earth. It is significant that even Justin Martyr, in the middle of the second century, regarded Millenarianism or Chiliasm as orthodox theology, though he admits that some Christians did not believe it. The tendency in the early Church was more and more to emphasize the salvation brought by Christ

at His first advent, and to recognize salvation itself as a present spiritual possession, though to be fully enjoyed only in a future life. This was the view which was desired to prevail, and the reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years was allowed to drop out of the teaching of the Church. But the eschatological hope remained so strong as to encourage contempt for mundane conditions and indifference to the kingdoms of this world.

The hope of a resurrection of the flesh belonged originally to Chiliastic ideas, and whenever this expectation falls away it tends to be modified. But at a time when the miserable condition of Europe left small room to dwell on happier social conditions, the dream of a kind of Valhalla sometime in the future was too precious to give up, especially as it was combined with realistic pictures of future retribution, which were emphasized also in the Orphic mysteries and Plato's myths. Eschatology did not disappear; it only took wings and fled to the Christian heaven and hell, curiously compounded of many diverse and indeed incompatible strands of belief.

The bodily resurrection of Christ, and His return on the clouds, necessitated a belief in His bodily ascension into heaven. St. Paul mentions the ascension (Harnack is wrong in saying that he does not); but it is not mentioned by Clement of Rome, Hermas, Ignatius, or Polycarp. According to St. Luke (xxiv, 51) and Barnabas, the ascension took place on the day of the resurrection; and John (xx, 17) can hardly be interpreted in any other way. The post-resurrection appearances were therefore post-ascension appearances. Justin speaks several times of the Ascension, and the early writers also expatiate on the descent into Hades. Hermas says that the Apostles did the same, and Origen asserts that Moses, Samuel, and the prophets preached to the spirits in prison.

As for the Third Person of the Trinity, doctrine remained fluid till much later. Even Origen says that it is not yet decided whether the Holy Spirit is God's Son. We remember that St. Paul formally identifies 'the Lord' and 'the Spirit.' The baptismal formula, which is primitive, helped to give the doctrine of the Trinity a definite form.

Dogma was no doubt necessary as a discipline to check the luxuriant growth of legends about Christ, and to curb the ex-

travagant speculations of the Gnostics. Origen explains the state of affairs in very temperate language.

‘As men, not only in the labouring and servile classes but from the cultivated classes of Greece, came to see something honourable in Christianity, sects could not fail to arise, not simply from the desire of conflict and contradiction but because many scholars endeavoured to penetrate deeper into the truth of Christianity. In this way sects arose, which received their names from men who indeed admired Christianity in its essence, but from many different causes had arrived at different conceptions of it.’

This, however, was not the temper in which most ecclesiastical writers approached those who dared to think for themselves. The detestable spirit of furious bigotry has dogged the footsteps of our religion ever since the sons of Zebedee wished to call down fire from heaven upon a Samaritan village. Polycarp, Justin, Irenaeus, Tertullian, join in savage abuse of Marcion, with the result that we are all curious to know what he actually taught. Theophilus of Alexandria declares that John Chrysostom was not only not a Christian, but ‘far worse than Belshazzar. Christ will condemn him to be cast into outer darkness.’

How was it that in the face of this truculent temper some liberty survived, and prevented the institution from prematurely strangling the ideas which it was founded to protect? You may think that I am pressing upon you a fad of my own, but I think it was mainly the Platonic tradition in Christian theology.

A friend of mine, now a diocesan bishop and no longer a Liberal, having ascertained that the then Bishop of Oxford would make difficulties about ordaining him, went to Ripon, and began explaining to the Bishop that on certain points his views were not orthodox. Bishop Boyd Carpenter cut him short with the question, ‘Are you a Platonist or an Aristotelian?’ ‘A Platonist.’ ‘Then you need say no more.’ For some reason, a Platonist may steal a horse when an Aristotelian may not look in at the stable window. In spite of St. Thomas Aquinas, it is possible to cut Aristotle out of Christianity, but not Plato. Plato has been called a Christian before Christ. In some moods I fear he was a Hildebrandian before Hildebrand.

The Apologists in the second century had already claimed as Christians those pagan thinkers who lived in accordance with the divine Logos. But it was in the school of Alexandria that

a deliberate effort was made to Christianize the Platonic tradition. The Jews of Egypt had begun it, and of course their method was to say that Plato, the 'Attic Moses,' had stolen from the Jews all his best things, which might properly be reclaimed. The transcendence of the Godhead, and eternity as independent of time and place—these doctrines are found in Philo. The great change of Jesus the Messiah into the Son of God, the Logos, had already taken place in the second century. The barbarized Platonism of the Gnostics was discredited, but for Clement the perfect Christian is still the Gnostic. The more respectable Gnosticism was absorbed by Clement and Origen.

Rome already had a fixed creed by 140 A.D., and no Christian philosophy could develop there. But Alexandria knew nothing of the West; even Tertullian of Carthage was unknown to the Catechetical School, the relation of which to the University of Alexandria may be compared to that of King's College, London, to London University. Alexandrian theology was not fettered by any baptismal confession.

Clement, who was canonized in the East and given a festival on the 4th of December, was omitted from the roll by Clement VIII and Benedict XIV, his orthodoxy being suspect at Rome. He was a scholar and a man of letters, pure and simple, and it is the fashion now to say that he was not a deep thinker. But he is the most readable of all the Fathers, and modern scholars find his attitude very sympathetic. For example, has any theologian, except the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, written better about Faith than Clement?

'Faith, which the Greeks despise, is a voluntary anticipation, the assent of piety—the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen, as the Apostle says. It is the beginning of action, the foundation of rational choice, when a man sets before himself the demonstration which he anticipates. Voluntarily to follow what is good is the beginning of understanding it. As Heracleitus says, If you do not hope you will not find what is beyond your hopes. Obedience to the commandments, which implies trust in God, is a mode of learning. Faith is a compendious knowledge of essentials, while knowledge is a sure demonstration of the things received through faith, carrying us on to unshaken conviction. There is a first kind of saving change from heathenism to faith, a second from faith to knowledge; and knowledge as it passes on into love begins at once to establish a mutual friendship between the knower and the known. Perhaps he who has reached this stage is equal to the angels.' He sums up: 'Knowledge (*γνώσις*) is faithful; faith is knowable' (*γνωστή ἡ πίστις*).

We find here the Platonic primary article of faith, that 'the fully real can be fully known'; but the faculty which knows the fully real is not the understanding, the logical faculty (*διάνοια*), but the intelligence or spirit (*νοῦς*), which is the whole personality united harmoniously under its highest activity; and the ascent of the soul must proceed *pari passu* with the knowledge of God. Faith begins as the resolution to stand or fall by the noblest hypothesis. It begins as an experiment; it ends as an experience.

Origen must remain for all time one of the glories of Christian philosophy. No theologian has realized more fully that there must be a symbolic, sacramental element in the forms of faith. He understood the aim and method of the Fourth Gospel better than any commentator before our own time. Some of his speculations have not stood the test of time; others, though frowned upon by later ecclesiasticism, are still living. But it is his attitude towards truth which makes him a hero of Christian thought.

The reign of Justinian marks an epoch, and as Westcott says it coincided with a displacement of Plato by Aristotle. Justinian struck a threefold blow at the past; he closed the Schools of Athens, he abolished the Consulship at Rome, and he procured the formal condemnation of Origen. Origen's influence henceforth slept till Erasmus wrote to John Colet:

'I have read a great part of the works of Origen, and under his teaching I think I have made good progress, for he opens, so to speak, the fountains of theology, and indicates the methods of the science.'

After the sixth century, theology is fettered by authority, and the dead hand lies heavy on Christian thought. 'Sayings of the Fathers,' sometimes forged, set limits to inquiry. From Augustine onward a heretic was one who rejected any of the articles of the Creed or questioned the doctrines of the Church which had almost the same degree of authority, on sacraments, penance, and the like, and one who professed any heresy already condemned. In the Middle Ages there were no more new dogmatic decisions. Italy and Spain have never troubled themselves much about dogmas if they were nothing more; but with the growth of Papal autocracy free thinking became treason, and was driven underground.

The concept of Tradition needs a brief elucidation. The authority of the Bible, frequently appealed to as absolute, was not isolated from Church tradition till the Reformation. Everything in the Church was apostolic, and therefore incapable of revision or amendment; where there was doubt, the East was more ready to appeal to Scripture, the West to Tradition. Tradition was an elastic category; the Church was too wise to systematize it. But strictly, it consisted of the contents of the Creeds, especially of the Nicene Creed as revised at the Council of Constantinople. In the West the so-called Apostles' Creed was also a primary authority. But before long, disciplinary and ceremonial provisions were treated as part of the tradition.

The existence of an *unwritten* tradition (παράδοσις ἄγραφος), which dispensed with all criteria, was actually made a dogma; but it was so obviously dangerous that only a limited use was made of it. I think it arose first in the East; the appeal to it is not uncommon in the Cappadocian Fathers. I do not think it was used to justify the introduction of new formulae, which was better supported by appeals to old documents, genuine or forged. Even the General Councils never claimed the right to add anything new; the most they could do was to unfurl the real meaning of what had been held 'always, everywhere, and by all.' The absence of a Papacy in the East has naturally given the theory of tradition a more fixed and immovable form. There was no one at Constantinople or Alexandria or Moscow who could say with Pius IX, 'La tradizione sono Io.' I need not remind you that in the East there was no renaissance and no reformation.

I cannot follow the history of the struggle for doctrinal freedom into modern times. I have not time. It is certain that in the Church of England and in some other branches of the Reformed Church there is far more freedom of thought than has ever been permitted before since the petrification of theology which I have described. Also, that this freedom has been gained mainly in the last half century. Also, that there is a reaction against it, chiefly in the young, a reaction which is shown by the very tepid support given to such societies as ours, and in such reactionary movements as the theology of Karl Barth. I can only very briefly indicate some of the causes of this change.

The main cause is the distrust of the intellect, proclaimed by William James and the pragmatists, and by the school of Bergson. Science has become less dogmatic, and shows signs of retreating into an abstract study of mathematical symbols, with no claim to absolute truth. Plato's venture of faith, that the highest value is the most truly real, is denied. The ontological argument, I may say in passing, is not an argument at all, but an act of intellectual faith, the thinker's vote of confidence in the validity of thought. But this is now discredited. The historical school turns the absolutes of religion into the relatives of an evolutionary process. Psychology and biology reduce religious faith to a mere instinct in the service of life. It ends in a philosophy of illusionism—the 'Als ob' of Vaihinger—which includes science itself. Instead of the antithesis between true and false we have a table of degrees of practical value among fictions.

Scepticism is the real foundation of reactionary dogmatism, the avowed foundation being ingeniously supported by the superstructure. Since nothing is certain; since the only absolute truth is that there is no absolute truth, let us take what suits us. We shall find that orthodoxy embodies an empirical tradition of mind-cure which is far better than Christian science or psychical analysis. It has lived for 1,500 years because it has been found to work. It delivers the goods.

The answer to this is that religion cannot rest satisfied with 'Als ob.' The values of religion are absolute values. If there is no absolute truth, or if we are cut off from all knowledge of things as they are, God is an empty concept; we had better give up using the word. Relativism ends by undermining its own foundations.

May we not also say that traditionalism no longer delivers the goods? The gulf between science and religion (to use the words common in the last century) is not being closed by degrading space and time into mere shadows, leaving nothing of their substance except an inexplicable unitedness of the two. Materialism is not transcended by defecating matter to a transparency. Heisenberg's principle of indeterminism does not rehabilitate miracles.

The faith of to-day must be free to create its own symbols,

which claim no finality, but which do for the present allow us to live in harmony with ourselves, without doing violence to our intellectual conscience. I do not myself think that they will take us far from traditional orthodoxy; but we cannot remain bound hand and foot by the dogmas of past ages. The Spirit of God speaks in its own language to each generation of mankind. We cannot do without symbols, even in philosophy, as Plato knew; but the symbol must be a real projection of the thing signified, a translation into terms of space and time of some super-spatial and super-temporal truth. Some of the traditional symbols of our faith have either been hardened into flat historical recitals or have in other ways lost their spiritual significance. Faith is a spring of *unconscious* poetry. When symbols become transparent they cease to bind. Those who still find them satisfying must of course be allowed to keep them; but if Christianity is to live, it must be free to find a language which is now intelligible to those who think for themselves. Only let us not forget the wise caution of Harnack:

‘Like every living plant, religion grows only inside a bark. Distilled religion is no religion at all.’

The religion of all sensible men is like trying to talk in no language in particular.

TESTS OF ORTHODOXY

By R. B. HENDERSON, M.A., B.D., Headmaster of Alleyn's School.

ORTHODOXY means right thinking or right opinion and is usually opposed to heterodoxy, which means other thinking or other opinion. It will be observed therefore that heresy, which means choosing — Liddel and Scott adds *choice*, *eligible* — is not necessarily connected with either kind of doxy. Clearly it is possible for a thinker to choose rightly and so — in spite of, or even because of, his heresy — to be orthodox.

Nor is this as fantastic as some might think. There have been times when the heretics have been the true right-thinkers, and I am not, I believe, alone in my conviction that our own is such a time.

But our theme is not 'orthodoxy,' but 'tests of orthodoxy,' and, before it is tackled, one preliminary question must be answered. Is orthodoxy — right thinking, right opinion — of sufficient importance in itself to merit discussion at a conference, such as this, attended by serious-minded people? Does it matter what we think, so long as our actions are good? Cannot an unorthodox man be a saint? (It will be noticed that the question was not — can a heretic be a saint? the answer to which is easy.) I have no doubt myself of the proper answer, for I believe that it is a matter of the first importance that right-thinking should prevail.

Good will — benevolence — is not enough of itself to ensure good living. There must also be right thinking. To put the matter in an extreme form — it is not possible to make men good when their thoughts are evil. Every man is therefore a theologian, and it is of great importance that his theology should be sound.

This preliminary question thus summarily — perhaps far too summarily — disposed of, we can go on to the real problem before us. What tests can be applied to ensure right thinking? A moment's thought will shew that the problem is not simple but complex. The subject of this conference is 'A Comprehensive Church'; does that mean that we are primarily concerned

not so much with tests of orthodoxy, as such, as with conditions of Church membership? May we say that what we are really concerned with is this — on what terms should men and women, boys and girls be allowed to enter and to remain in the Church? We must make up our minds as to the meaning of the word 'Church.' It comes from the Greek *ἐκκλησία*, an assembly and especially the assembly of all the citizens of a state. Now it might be supposed that any society of people, joined together for any purpose whatever, is free to make its own regulations and to impose its own conditions of membership on all and any who wish to belong to that community, but in the case of the Christian Church such liberty is necessarily severely limited, for it claims and must claim to be the Church of Christ, and is therefore bound so to frame its laws that it includes within its membership those who are Christians and no others. Furthermore, the Church of England can never lose sight of its peculiar relation to the State. The Christian Church and the Church of England are not, and were never intended to be co-extensive. The Elizabethan idea was that the Church of England should be co-extensive with the political State of England and should form a part only of the whole Church of Christ, which is defined as being 'the entire community of Christians scattered over the whole face of the globe.' An ideal Church of England should therefore include all English people, but there is no reason why it should include Scotsmen or Frenchmen, provided only that it recognizes that Scotsmen and Frenchmen have as much right to membership of the Church of Christ as their more fortunate brethren who happen to live in this Island South of the Tweed.

Now a Church may be too comprehensive, and this is a danger which especially assails a National Church. There is little temptation to a Baptist Church so to frame its rules for admission that any right-minded man would be at home in it. The Baptist, like other people, likes to convert people to his way of thinking, but he has no desire to admit them into his community until they have been converted. The Church of England is in a different position and the temptation to allow and even to encourage every right-minded man to belong to it is very real. Moreover, history lends some support to such a comprehensiveness.

When Constantine adopted Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire, it was his intention to make Christians of all the inhabitants of his vast domains, and the result was much what might have been expected—considerable gain to Constantine but something very much resembling death to the Church of Christ.

When, in the fifth century, the Roman Empire—or the Western half of it—fell, the Church stood out above the wreckage and it thus came about that, throughout the Dark and Middle Ages, the fundamental idea was that everyone born into a Christian land was a Christian. When the Empire was resuscitated, first under Charles the Great and later and more permanently by Otto, everyone, whatever his nationality, was a subject of the Emperor and a member of the Church. Church membership was thus a birthright.

This same idea, limited now in its application to our country alone, is fundamental in our Prayer Book to-day. The Church of England was intended to be comprehensive. It was meant to include all subjects of the Crown. 'How very hard it is to be a Christian' was a thought foreign to the age. Anyone could do it, all decent people were members of the Church and therefore they were Christians. It was a Christian land.

But, as in the case of the Darwinian man who wooed the fair lady—'it would not do, the scheme fell through'—there was far too much of the ape in the ordinary man: he might indeed ape Christianity, but this did not make him a Christian. We are therefore driven back, in this quest for a test, to the first beginnings of things. We must try to see what the New Testament itself has to teach us about the infallible signs of orthodoxy, for which we are to look.

The moment we get back to New Testament times, the truth appears with the utmost clarity. The birthday of the Church was Pentecost—all were baptised with a new spirit. The Church was the assembly of those men and women who possessed the new spirit and were possessed by it. From the day of Pentecost, it is the Third Person of the Trinity who takes the first place. Even the Second becomes, in a sense, subordinate to it. The importance of Jesus lies chiefly in his relation to the Spirit. So we find the author of the Fourth Gospel saying, 'It is ex-

pedient for you that I go away' and 'Greater works than these shall ye do because I go to the Father.' This was written towards the end of the first century—it may have been later—and the account of Pentecost that we have in *Acts* is also to be dated many years after the events. It will be well therefore to see what our earliest authority—St. Paul—has to say about the Spirit.

Now St. Paul had two fundamental tasks to perform. One was to reconcile the new Jewish dispensation with the old and the other to commend his good news to the Greco-Roman world which knew nothing and cared less about the ancient Jewish dispensations of Providence. With St. Paul's first task we are not now concerned, but his view of the second will be found to provide the solution to our present difficulties—in so far as solution is possible.

It can, I think, be put quite simply. To the Greek philosophic mind, man was dual, body and soul. The soul was imprisoned in the body and was continually seeking release. The body died but the soul might be immortal. This is the intellectual background of most of Greek Philosophy, from Plato downwards; it is also the starting point of the mystery religions. But this dualism is Greek, it is Western, and we are so familiar with it that we find it hard to realize that it is not Hebrew and that therefore it must originally have been a novelty to St. Paul. But Paul was preaching to the Greeks, so he tried to accommodate himself to their modes of thought. To the Hebrew, man was indivisible: one might speak of his parts—hands and feet and eyes and ears—but the essential man-ness did not lie in any parts but in the whole, which was integral, one not two. When therefore the Jews began to speculate about an after life—and it will be noticed that they did not do so until very much later than the Greeks—they were in a difficulty about the body. They really had no choice in the matter. They were obliged to resuscitate one. Hence the doctrine of the resurrection. St. Paul, indeed, attempts to overcome the difficulty by the invention of Spiritual Bodies to take the place of the Earthly ones that are put into the ground and see corruption.

It may well be that both conceptions—the Greek and the Hebrew—are false. We mortals probably do best when we bow

our heads in admission of our complete ignorance of matters which, for his own good reasons, God has concealed from our eyes. Nevertheless, the attempt to see just what was in the minds of these great men of the past may yield some of the results needed for the present inquiry.

Body and Soul, we have taken over the conception from the Greeks, so that this kind of dualism is so familiar to us that we hardly stop to think about it. St. Paul also seems to have taken it over and used it in translating his message into Greek, but he must have thought about it a very great deal for he added an all-important something to it. Body and soul, he is willing to allow, may make a man, and if the body be healthy and the soul beautiful it will make a very good man too—but it will still be a pagan. A good pagan is a very fine creature indeed, a good citizen, a pleasant companion and a trustworthy man of business. What more then is needed? everything, according to St. Paul. That man is still dead and dead he will remain until the breath (*πνεῦμα*) of God has been instilled into him and he becomes a Son of God.

The second man became a living Spirit. The offer of the spirit is universal—how much more then will he give Holy Spirit to them that ask him? We are to become children of adoption whereby we cry ‘Abba Father.’

And so at length we arrive at this momentous conclusion—the Church is *πνευματοφορος* in both senses—spirit borne and spirit bearing. Ye must be born again:* that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the spirit is spirit. The whole of the New Testament, with the Old as a preparation, is consonant with this view, illustrating from cover to cover the workings and the manifestations of the Spirit.

Two complications occur and they have distracted our minds from the real, the main, the central truth—the complications of the Messiahship and the false doctrines of the Atonement. Neither need detain us here—not that they are not vastly important, but because they are secondary to our purpose and indeed to the main purpose of the Church, which is nothing more nor less than the propagation of the Spirit of God.

* This pun is no worse than the Greek one of the Fourth Evangelist—in fact spirit-borne is a double pun.

How is a test for such an orthodoxy to be devised? Can the Spirit of God be measured by a yardstick? 'The wind bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the voice thereof but knowest not whence it cometh and whither it goeth: so is everyone that is born of the Spirit.' No one can set bounds to the activity of the spirit: woe be to that man who tries. Yet many have tried and we must next see what sort of tests could possibly be applied for the orthodoxy we have in mind. They are of three kinds and I hope to be able to shew that they are all unsatisfactory in conception and iniquitous in action.

There is first the easiest test of all to apply and the most injurious in its application. This test consists simply in taking the outward and visible sign as in itself a sufficient guarantee of the inward and spiritual grace. To become a member of the Church, some initiatory ceremony must be endured; to remain a member, certain rites must be duly performed. Sounding brass and tinkling cymbal: this is not, of course, to say that baptism, confirmation and the eucharist are nothing—it is only to assert that while these may, and with many do, constitute true sacraments because they *are* the outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace, the performance of these or any other ceremonies cannot possibly constitute any guarantee whatever of the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit, and no prayers of pious bishops, clergy and people will make them so. Of course there is no reason why baptism, confirmation and eucharistic observance should not be made conditions of membership of a Church, but if they are so enforced that Church must lose all claim to be comprehensive and be prepared to be regarded as a mere sect.

When we turn to the New Testament itself and read, for example, the Epistles of St. Paul, we find ourselves in a different world. Baptism is mentioned only thirteen times in the Epistles, and when it is not quite clearly used figuratively, it is spoken of in a somewhat disparaging way—'Christ sent me not to baptise but to preach the good news!' In this same passage the Apostle shews that he had actually forgotten that he himself ever made use of the ceremony at Corinth, of so little importance did it seem in his mind. But of the Spirit he has much to say. The word occurs some hundred and forty-four times in the

Epistles, not counting the Pastorals. One hundred and forty-four times in ten letters — it is perfectly clear that the Spirit was, in St. Paul's mind, a very important part of his message.

I conclude, therefore, that if we are searching for tests of orthodoxy in a comprehensive Church we cannot possibly lay stress on any observance of rites and ceremonies, and this conclusion is confirmed by the condition of the Christian Churches in England to-day. If we make baptism, confirmation and eucharistic-conformity, or any selection of these three, conditions of membership for a Church which is to be *the* Church of England, we shall find that we have excluded, among others, three groups of Christians — the Society of Friends, the Salvation Army and the Unitarians — who perhaps more than any other groups of people (and certainly not less than others) shew the fruits of the Spirit of God.

As for confirmation, it is not easy to find scriptural authority for it at all. We hear of St. Paul passing through Syria and Cilicia confirming the Churches, but no one supposes that he laid his hands on them. It would, however, be unfair to stress this point and, in spite of its unmistakably mediaeval flavour in many places, much may be forgiven in a confirmation service which contains such a lovely prayer as the one said by the Bishop at the moment of the laying on of hands.

To sum up under this head — the performance of rites and ceremonies make a very easily applied but totally unsatisfactory test of orthodoxy, and it is difficult to imagine anything less conformable with what is known of the Founder of Christianity.

We pass on therefore to credal tests. There is little about creeds in the New Testament — the three well-known ones in the Prayer Book were born in strife, came to maturity in the dark ages and are now leading a burdensome and boring old age. They are however fine things in their way, and they give much delight to scholars. There must always be a sort of impish joy over the battle of the iota — almost as mysterious an entity as the square root of minus one, for which this little letter stands in Mathematics. We may allow that the creeds are very good, if not quite adequate, expressions of the theological beliefs of those who made them, but one may question whether a single theologian who had a hand in them at the time of their formu-

lation could honestly subscribe to them if he were living to-day.

The creed of the Christian can be summed up in two words—the first two of the Lord's Prayer. This is to the Christian what the *Shema* is to the Jew. Everything is contained in it, but it is inevitable that the more important deductions should be made explicit. If God is our Father, it must be that we are his children. All mankind is God's Family: it is to be expected that God will wish to communicate with his children. What more natural mode of communication can there be than by an ideal son? So we arrive at the Second Person of the Trinity: nor can we stop there. Jesus is not the only medium through which God has spoken and still speaks to his children. All inspiration is God's work: all the men and women who shew forth the goodness, beauty and truth of the Godhead are inspired by the Holy Spirit which spake by the prophets and which will lead us into all truth.

Orthodoxy—right thinking—must include all this, and no one who is not prepared to go thus far with us will have any desire to be called a Christian. To go further than this and to attempt to define the three manifestations (*personae*) of the Trinity and their relations one to another is to embark on perilous seas—and to what purpose? It is easy to see the dangers of attempting to limit the activity of the Godhead (for that is what it comes to in the end) and it is difficult to see what advantage is to be gained by the process.

Well then, if we made a creed of this sort, might it be used as a test of orthodoxy and so also a test for Church membership? It certainly might, but the possibility is one thing, the justice, or even expediency quite another. Those who frame creeds and impose their acceptance on others forget the simple Apostolic warning, 'The devils believe and tremble.' Nowadays they sign and chuckle. I can see no trace of a credal test in the New Testament. We hear of the daily additions to the Church of those who were being saved, that is, those who were being filled with the Holy Spirit. We read in I *Cor.* xii, 3, that 'no man can say Jesus is Lord but in the Holy Spirit,' which is true, provided, as St. Paul certainly would have agreed, that the affirmation comes from the heart as well as the head. Men who are casting out demons in the name of Jesus are not to be forbidden,

even though they walk not with us. St. Paul remonstrates vehemently with those who deny the resurrection, but he does not suggest that they should be cast out of the Synagogue. That punishment he reserves for the morally delinquent. Nor do such well-known and oft-quoted passages as 'believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved' affect the matter in the slightest. It was not intellectual assent to assertions *about* Jesus but a surrender to Jesus as Lord that the Apostle had in mind.

So then we may assert our belief in God our Father, our loyalty to Jesus his Son and our faith in the Holy Spirit—we may, we can and we must—and no one who does not agree with us will wish to join our Church, so we need not bother ourselves with any other credal tests. Of course those who joined the Church at any time in the first century probably did share certain beliefs about Jesus but, on that point, it is of interest to note that, even in the New Testament itself, marked changes of what they did believe about Him are discernible as the message was gradually transferred from a Jewish to a Greek background. (See *Who was Jesus?* by the Rev. T. J. Wood. After 400 years series.)

We have seen then that the performance of rites and ceremonies makes an easy test for Church membership, but in no way ensures orthodoxy—right thinking. We have then gone on to examine some of the difficulties and dangers of a credal test—there remains a third test which, if it could be applied, would be entirely successful. This test moreover has the highest authority of Scripture—'by their fruits ye shall know them.' We are on firmer ground here. St. Paul has no hesitation in pronouncing sentence of excommunication against one whose conduct shews that he has no share in the Spirit of God. Ananias and Sapphira are expelled from the Church in a highly dramatic manner for lying to the Holy Ghost, while Simon Magus meets the severest censure for suggesting that power to give the Holy Spirit can be bought for cash. A conduct test might well be justified—if only it could be applied. But the simple truth is that it cannot, and the only time such a thing was attempted—by the Montanists—no good came of it and the Church was well nigh rent asunder. Why is this? Surely the answer lies in the

limitation of our own powers of judgment; who are we to say that the conduct of such and such a one falls below the standard required of a Christian. Who knows the strength of temptation? Who can assess the force of circumstances? Who indeed but God himself, who alone can read the hearts of sinful man. So then although this test would be perfect if it could be applied, it can only be applied by a perfect judge: the Church has produced some few men who might be trusted with such power, and it is significant that those are the very men who have refused to use it.

‘By their fruits ye shall know them,’ and so we find St. Paul not *defining* the Spirit but giving long lists of its fruits — love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance. Where these are found, we may be sure that there dwells the Spirit of God.

And so we reach our end. There is no test of orthodoxy of which any practical use can be made. It might almost be said that the easier of application any test may be, the more iniquitous will be the effect of its application. But we need not despair. The time is soon coming, and now is when only those who are brave enough to bear the obloquy of the world will wish to join any Christian Church. The Church has ceased to be, or it soon will have ceased to be, a community which offers any temptation to the unfaithful. We have had enough of the professional Christian and more than enough of the nominal one. There was little need of tests for the orthodox in the days of Diocletian and it is not unreasonable to hope that, in the very near future, the Church will be under no temptation to refuse admittance to anyone who shall profess and call himself a Christian.

DISCOVERY AND REVELATION

By Professor DE BURGH, M.A., F.B.A.

I.

THE title suggested for this paper caused me a moment's hesitation. I thought that the terms 'discovery' and 'revelation' were intended as an antithesis. But little reflexion is needed to see that they are correlatives. All discovery is revelation, and all revelation is discovery. The distinction is simply one of emphasis, on the subjective and objective moments in all knowledge. What is known is never a mere mental construction, but always an independent reality that reveals itself *ad modum recipientis* to the mind of the knower; while the mind is never merely passive, but functions actively in the discovery of the reality revealed. Let me give two illustrations. (1) Descartes has recorded how, when thinking in solitude on the tenth of November, 1619, he 'discovered, in an access of enthusiasm, the foundations of a marvellous science' (*cum plenus forem enthusiasmo et mirabilis scientiae fundamenta reperirem*).¹ The discovery had been heralded the preceding night by a dream, which he interpreted as due to supernatural inspiration; so much so that he vowed a pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady of Loretto, a vow fulfilled in the ensuing year. Descartes, though an orthodox Catholic and the pupil of the Jesuits at La Flèche, was, of all philosophers, the most single-minded in his rationalism and the least prone to fall a victim to superstition. Moreover, the knowledge revealed to him had nothing in common with religion. It was the discovery of Analytical Geometry. (2) Everyone is familiar with the lines in which Wordsworth, when nearing his thirtieth year, tells how he had

' . . . learned
To look on Nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth,'

but as the revelation of a spiritual presence

that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thoughts,

¹ A. and T., x, 175.

And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
 A lover of the meadows and the woods
 And mountains; and of all that we behold
 From this green earth. Of all the mighty world
 Of eye and ear, both what they half create
 And half perceive.' ²

Assuredly he does not mean by these last words that the content of his vision was composed of distinguishable factors assignable in Kantian fashion to the knowing mind and the known reality respectively; rather his meaning is that the vision in its entirety was at once a discovery of the knower and a revelation of the known. Any revelation, be it scientific, aesthetic, or religious, requires, in order to be a revelation, the active response of man's intelligence.

II.

So also is it with religious revelation, the type on which our interest is centred at this Conference. It is distinguished from other types of revelation by its object; what is revealed (the *revelatum*) is God. Not God alone, we must add; for God is the source of all being, and 'without Him nothing can either be or be conceived.' ³ The knowledge of God, if followed out by thought, illumines all other knowledge, expanding into a theocentric world-view; so that the religious thinker, like the philosopher, can be said to be, at least by implication, in Plato's phrase, 'a spectator of all time and of all being.' ⁴ Students of medieval thought will remember to what high purpose St. Bonaventura developed the sacramental view of the universe, discerning not only the divine image in man, but the footprints of God's creative power through all grades of organic and inorganic nature. But the primary object of religious revelation is God Himself. Moreover, in religion the revealer and the *revelatum* are one. Even in non-religious experience, an artist reveals his personality by his work, a friend his intention by speech or gesture. In religion, the problem of the revealing agency, which is perplexing in the case of a mathematical discovery or of the vision of a presence in nature, does not arise.

² Lines composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey.

³ Spinoza, *Eth.*, I, 15.

⁴ *Rep.* 486B.

The revelation is God's revelation of Himself. Further, the distinctive nature of what is revealed carries with it a corresponding difference in the mode of its reception. I follow the late Professor Alexander—who, whatever we may think of his theology, showed an understanding of religion from within rarely equalled by the most orthodox Christian thinkers—in holding that the religious sentiment is *sui generis*, and that, while

‘various emotions enter into its full constitution—fear, admiration, self-abasement—its distinctive constituent is the feeling of our going out towards something not ourselves and greater and higher than ourselves, with which we are in communion, a feeling whose object is not that of any of these subsidiary or suggesting emotions, nor of any combination of these.’⁵

In this, at least, Schleiermacher was right, though his insistence on the feeling of creaturely dependence obscured his recognition of the intellectual moment integral to religious experience. ‘God,’ in Alexander’s words, ‘is apprehended cognitively through the religious emotion by the assurance we call religious faith.’⁶ We must not let ourselves be bamboozled by an over-rigorous adhesion to the division of mental activities into cognition, conation and feeling. The higher emotions, such as the scientist’s or the artist’s passion for truth, or the love that moves a man to lay down his life for a friend, are rich with an intellectual quality, enabling their possessor to pierce into otherwise undiscovered secrets of nature, of our fellow-men, or of God. We may go further and say that knowledge is bound to be defective unless emotion be enlisted in the knowing. The task demands the service of man’s entire personality, even though it implies the subjection of personal desire to the disinterested search for truth.

But religion is not merely a human product; its roots lie, not in man’s desire, but in revelation. ‘Nothing’—to quote the Report of the Commission on Doctrine—‘can be discovered by man about God apart from the revelation of Himself by God to man.’ And it goes on to say, that the knowledge of God by the natural operations of reason implies ‘the prevenience of the Divine

⁵ *Space, Time, and Deity*, II, 373. But I cannot agree with Alexander when he says (*op. cit.* II, 343), ‘Religion is not the sentiment which is directed upon God; but God is that upon which the religious sentiment is directed.’ He would, of course, reject any supernatural revelation.

⁶ *Op. cit.* II, 402.

action and the illumination of the human mind by God⁷; or, as Canon Lilley has expressed it, that God is beforehand with us in every movement we make towards Him. How could it be otherwise? The reason by which we apprehend and interpret the revelation is God's own gift, implanted in man's nature. Let us beware of the error, to which Luther fell a victim, and which has been revived in these latter days by Karl Barth, of thinking that sin has so utterly marred the divine image that the exercise of reason can only lead man astray from knowledge of his Creator. How, then, are we to think about the time-honoured distinction between Natural and Revealed Religion, and the consequential distinction between Natural and Revealed Theology? The term 'revelation' is obviously used here in a different sense than that in which it is applied to all knowledge of God, and, again, to all knowledge whatsoever. By Natural Theology we do not mean, as was commonly supposed in the so-called Age of Enlightenment, what is common to all religions, the jejune residue discoverable by elimination of what is distinctive in each of the many religions known to history. That would leave us, as it left Spinoza, with a code of abstract moral precepts *plus* the belief in the existence of a still more abstract Deity. Even this barren concept, which treats all peculiarities of particular religions as equally irrelevant, could not hold its ground when once the view of primitive man as a purely rational animal and the appeal to the *consensus gentium* had been overthrown.⁸ We mean rather, in the words of the Commission on Doctrine, the 'factor in our knowledge of God due to reflection on the general nature of experience.'⁹ Plato's argument to Theism in the tenth book of the *Laws* is a case in point. He there infers, by a conjunction of what later ages called the cosmological and the teleological proofs, the existence of a supremely good soul or self-mover, who governs the world providentially in accordance with moral law. So in the thirteenth century, Aquinas, confronted by the rival claims of Judaism and Islam, compiled the *Summa Contra Gentiles* for the use of missionaries engaged in rational controversy with non-Christian

⁷ *Note on Discovery and Revelation*, p. 44.

⁸ See A. A. Bowman, *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. I, ch. ii.

⁹ p. 44; cf. C. C. J. Webb, *Studies in Natural Theology*, p. 50.

thinkers. Revealed religion, on the other hand, is grounded on a special communication, imparted directly, to the individual or the religious community, by God Himself. The knowledge has God as its immediate cause. I recall how, when living in East London nearly fifty years ago, I gave a lecture in the Isle of Dogs on the Discovery of America. When the time came for questions, a member of the audience rose and asked me brusquely whether I knew who had discovered America. I answered that I had been trying to show that the credit was due chiefly to Columbus. He informed me that I was in error: it was God who had discovered America. Ultimately, no doubt, he was right; if there be a God, nothing can ever happen without His sanction; but He operates normally through secondary causes, and it is with these that the scientist and the historian are concerned in their enquiries. As Bacon said, *Deum semper excipimus*. But in the case of revealed religion, the secondary agencies are lacking; God is the proximate and sole cause of the revelation. Hence the recipient of the revelation, though his mind is alert and active in the reception, does not apprehend truths *about* God, as in conceptual thinking; he knows God in personal communion. The assent of faith, in Newman's words, is not 'notional' but 'real.' Of course, he interprets the revelation in the light of antecedent reflection and experience, and subsequently develops its implications, so far as his intellectual capacity allows, into a body of theological doctrine. Thus there arises, on the basis of individual and corporate experience, what is known as Revealed Theology. The distinction, then, of Natural and Revealed is a real one, despite the fact that in recent times Natural Theology has been dethroned from the high place it held in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when it almost seemed as if God existed, in Mark Pattison's phrase, in order that His existence might be proved. Few to-day outside the Roman communion would regard the traditional arguments as demonstrative. At best, they are allowed a high degree of probability. Nor does the God they offer—the *ens realissimum*, or the first cause, or the All-wise designer, suffice as an object of religious worship. Even the moral argument—

¹⁰ *Grammar of Assent*, ch. iv; cf. Quick, *Doctrines of the Creed*, ch. i, p. 1, where 'assent' is used to mean 'notional' assent.

as I have maintained elsewhere¹¹—requires supplementation from the evidence of religious experience. Thus the rôle of Natural Theology is consequential rather than primary; it affords confirmation, on grounds intelligible in part to human reason, of beliefs already accepted by faith in a revelation.

III.

But the distinction, though a real one, must not be unduly pressed. The fields of Natural and Revealed religion overlap. The same holds of the closely analogous distinction, on the side of the human subject, between Reason and Faith. Faith implies imperfect insight into the truth of what is believed; but partial insight is not precluded, and the very consciousness of the defect provokes to further effort after understanding. For the Christian, faith is always *fides quaerens intellectum*. Moreover, his reason, in recognizing its limitations, recognizes also the reasonableness of a faith in what lies beyond them. Indeed, there is no exercise of reason, in religion or elsewhere, which does not presuppose an act of faith in the knowability of what is as yet unknown. Intellect in man is always *intellectus quaerens fidem*. So the truths of Natural Religion, if such there be, may be apprehended, though not by the same mind at the same time, by faith. A child or a savage may accept on the authority of revelation beliefs in God's existence, intelligence, or goodness which Plato and many other non-Christian thinkers claimed to prove by processes of natural reason. Conversely, revealed truths may be rendered in part intelligible by speculative enquiry. Take the two Christian doctrines which seem most obviously to lie beyond the compass of the human intellect, those of the Trinity and of the Incarnation. Many philosophers—I do not say all—contend, on purely non-religious grounds, that a unity which unifies diversity or otherness is more intelligible to reason than a bare undifferentiated principle of unity such as the One of Neo-Platonism, and that the intelligibility is most complete when the diversity is wholly internal to the unifying principle. Many, again, would hold that, if there be a God whose

¹¹ *From Morality to Religion*, ch. v.

being transcends that of the created universe, the only intelligible escape from an ultimate dualism must be by way of God's immanence, in a manner equally real with His transcendence, within the world of space and time. Nor is it easy to conceive such a bridging of the gulf, save as a unique historical manifestation. The thought of two equally perfect God-men seems to present as flagrant a contradiction as the thought of two equally perfect Gods. Here at least the principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles may be accepted as beyond question.

I said just now that the human mind can grasp the reasonableness of a faith in what transcends human understanding. This statement, which is backed by the high authority of Kant, calls for further explanation. That we are conscious of our finitude as thinking beings is indisputable, as is also our ability to conceive an intelligence greater than our own. We can only know a fragment of what is to be known, and we can only know this fragment piecemeal, in a succession of temporal acts and by discursive processes of inference. We cannot judge from the standpoint of the Absolute. I assume further that the God of religious worship is the transcendent Creator of the universe, and as such is parted by an infinite gulf from all created being. How can the gulf be bridged? Not from man's side; for how can man by searching find out God? Here is where Natural Theology falls short of sufficiency; it rests wholly on analogy between the finite and the infinite, between man's goodness, intelligence or love, and the goodness, intelligence or love of the transcendent God. I will not here repeat, what I have written elsewhere, on the failure of the way of analogy to span the chasm.¹² The only refuge lies in God's revelation of Himself. 'The One,' in Plotinus' words, 'must needs descend,' manifesting the truth of His nature by revelation, in person or by symbol, in a form apprehensible by finite mind. The descent is no derogation, in the judgment of reason, from the majesty of God's infinite love. It is of the nature of love on all levels of being to go forth from its plenitude towards that which is of lower value than itself, lifting it thereby in response to its own plane. So Aquinas argued that, if natural reason were man's sole access to the knowledge of God, the way would be open only to a select

¹² *From Morality to Religion*, ch. v, pp. 167 ff.

aristocracy of intellect, and to these few only after prolonged and painful search. Even for them, the inference would be tentative and open to dispute. Moreover, in triumphing by their own mental effort, they would be exposed to the most deadly of all temptations—intellectual pride.¹³

In principle, then, it is reasonable to believe in God's self-revelation. But what of the claims of a specific revelation, such as Christianity? The believer's acceptance involves an act of will, over and above a 'notional' assent of the intelligence. Yet here too, as Aquinas contended, the intellect plays its part. Reason has the first word, though not the last. For the choice is not arbitrary; as in the case of moral volition, it is guided, though not determined, by a twofold intellectual judgment, on the truth of the revelation in question, and on its goodness. Guided, but not determined. A man may judge the revelation to be both true and good, and yet be deterred from choosing it by fear of obloquy or martyrdom. Another may give his 'real' assent unreflectively, accepting the revelation on authority or by sudden conversion. All are not called to be theologians. Yet the faith can only be justified if reason approves the truth and goodness of its content. By its content, I mean its content as a whole. Doctrines and institutions are not to be judged piecemeal, like the curate's egg, by the method of analysis. As in the case of works of art, the principle of organic unities must be borne in mind. Nor can the verdict on truth of fact be sharply severed from that on value. I cannot here discuss these disputable questions, as I should like to do; my point is that the judgment, alike of truth and of value, is what the late Professor Stocks has called a 'total judgement,' and is passed on the Christian scheme of thought and life in its entirety, including both its speculative *Weltanschauung* and its effects in history.¹⁴ The issue at stake is how far Christianity, when compared with other religions, makes sense of man's whole experience, in theory and in practice. Its decision calls into play both the speculative and the practical functions of reason.

¹³ *S.c.G.*, i, 5.

¹⁴ Stocks: Riddell Lectures, reprinted in *Reason and Intuition*; see pp. 38 ff.

IV.

Assuming that religion gives knowledge of God, I have directed attention to the source and nature of that knowledge rather than to the question of its validity. But there is one line of objection to which, on account of its vitality and its influence in contemporary thought, a reference must be made before I close. It threatens, not religion itself, whose emotional value it respects and claims to render immune from scientific and historical criticism, but the possibility of any religious *knowledge*. The position I have in mind is that of the Logical Positivists, one that is much favoured at the moment not only at Cambridge but at the sister University and elsewhere, especially among the younger generation of philosophers. I shall confine myself to a single point, which is fundamental, but independent of the subtleties that mark the body of their enquiries. I refer to the principle of verification. Only those statements, we are told, have 'meaning'—for purposes, that is, of rational discussion—which are verifiable by reference either to sense-perception or to introspection. I am speaking of statements as to matters of fact; propositions of pure mathematics and pure logic, which have no relation to existents, are held, rightly or wrongly, to be 'tautologous.' Now no statement about God's existence or nature is in principle verifiable in either of these ways. All such statements, therefore, are strictly unmeaning; in the technical terminology of the school, they are 'nonsense.'¹⁵ Since only those statements that have meaning can be literally true or false, the question of the truth or falsity of theological statements—yes, and of ethical, aesthetic and metaphysical statements also—cannot arise. They are not even false; they are unmeaning. Strictly, they are not statements at all, but emotional ejaculations, like 'how priceless!' or 'curse the cook!' couched misleadingly in indicative form. The conclusions to which this doctrine leads are avowedly paradoxical; but no serious philosopher should be contemptuous, when others insist, even at the price of paradox, on 'the rigour of the game.' The first comment I have to offer on this principle of verification is of a formal

¹⁵ Possibly 'important' nonsense, but the meaning of importance in this usage stands in need of elucidation.

character. Does it itself conform to the conditions that it lays down? If it does not, it is surely by self-confession devoid of meaning. No one can dispute that *some* sentences which are verifiable by sense-perception or by introspection have meaning. This much at least is verifiable in the ways required. Perhaps—though this is more questionable and a subject of debate within the school—we may generalize inductively, and allow that *all* sentences verifiable in one or other of these ways have meaning. But with what right can it be held that *only* sentences so verifiable, *and no others*, have meaning? What verification is possible, by sense or introspection, of the meaninglessness of those sentences which *ex hypothesi* are incapable of verification? Yet the principle asserts their meaninglessness. Have we not here a manifest contradiction? If, on the other hand, it is claimed that the principle is a conventional definition, and therefore stands in no need of verification, we must ask with what right can an arbitrary ‘stipulation’ masquerade as a criterion of truth? Truth is objective or it is nothing. But, even if we accept the principle of verification, can it be contended that it rules out theological (and metaphysical) statements as nonsensical? Everything here depends on its interpretation, about which there seems to be much division of opinion within the school. This is no ground for censure; rather is it a symptom of a fresh and vigorous movement in speculation. On the view, voiced a few years since by Professor Wittgenstein, the chief prophet of Logical Analysis in this country, that the verification must be in terms of *my own present* experience, the utterances of the mystic would seem to have as much, or as little, title to credence as those of the scientist or of anyone else. If, on the other hand, the reference is confined to possible objects of perception, then indeed statements about God, who is not such an object, are excluded; but so are inductive generalizations and statements about a continuant self. Are such doctrines of the Ego, for instance, as are maintained by Ward and Dr. Tennant, intrinsically unmeaning? Awkward questions would also arise as to statements about the historical past. What, again, about the quasi-ultimate entities of the physicist? An electron is not an infinitesimally small body that would be perceptible if we possessed a microscope of sufficient magnifying power. It is an entity of quite a different type,

a field of energy discernible only by its effects. Let us pass, then, to what Mr. Ayer calls the 'weak' sense of verifiability, in which a proposition is allowed to be verifiable if 'it is possible for experience to render it probable,' or, alternatively, if any observations are 'relevant to the determination of its truth or falsehood.'¹⁶ As Mr. Ayer remarks, the criterion here 'seems liberal enough.' Everything hinges on the extension of the term 'relevance.' Causal connexions, at any rate, are admitted; statements about electrons or the self can be verified or disproved by reference to their perceptible or introspectible effects. The issue, it is recognized, is not one of demonstrative evidence, but of probability. What, then, about God? Aquinas claimed, as do members of the Roman Communion to-day, that God's existence could be proved by the cosmological argument, as the necessary presupposition of observable movements. Why should this argument, be it demonstrative or merely probable, be rejected as unmeaning, on the sole ground that God Himself is not a possible object of sense-perception? If it be urged, in accordance with Kant, that the causal relation holds only between phenomena in time, is it senseless to dispute the truth of this restriction? Is it senseless, again, to infer from sensible phenomena to their transcendent *ground*? Is the Principle of Sufficient Reason outside the scope of rational enquiry, so that it is nonsensical even to contend that it is false? Yet, if such questions be admitted as rationally disputable, the door is opened for the entire theological, and metaphysical, *corpus*. Once more, if the appeal to introspection be allowed, we must be prepared to deal seriously with the position of Anselm and of Descartes, that the idea of God is thus discoverable in our own minds. Not only the cosmological, but—*vae victis!*—the ontological argument, becomes legitimate matter of philosophical discussion. These arguments may be true or they may be false; they may be demonstrative or they may be merely probable; but the sentences in which they are formulated are not unmeaning. To condemn them as such implies an arbitrary *fiat* of dogmatism. I decline to be bluffed into acquiescence by the appeal to the authority of David Hume, whose reasonings, especially on causality, seem to be riddled with inconsistency. The dogmatism of the school

¹⁶ *Language, Truth and Logic*, pp. 22 f., 26; cf. p. 12.

is equally apparent in their language about emotion. Cognitive and emotional attitudes, the utterances that respectively express them, and the cognitive and emotional factors in a single sentence, are severed one from the other as by a hatchet. No note is taken of the intellectual quality that characterizes the higher-grade emotions, as in aesthetic appreciation, personal affection, or religious worship. A study of elementary psychology would go a long way to correct these errors. Nor are the sentences of banishment pronounced by the Logistical Positivists themselves always uncoloured by emotional prejudice. There are indeed times when, through the logical argument, we seem to catch the echo of the ejaculation, 'Damn your ethics! Damn your metaphysics! Damn your theology!'

V.

One word more.

We have seen that revelation, as discovery, implies activity of reason in the recipient. Must it not, then, be accommodated to the limitations of human apprehension? Is so, how can the claim be maintained that Christ's revelation like His sacrifice is one, perfect and all-sufficient? Can *any* revelation be final?

It is not merely a question of defective understanding on man's part, of his slow and stumbling progress in interpretation, of his failure, for all the aids of grace, to see God save *per speculum in aenigmate*. That goes without saying. Think of the first disciples—think of St. Peter—and of their blindness to the import of their Master's words and acts. Our issue touches the revelation itself, as given by God to man. Must not *that* be accommodated to human capacities in order to be understood at all?

Here, I think, a *distinguo* is needed, between the *revelatio* and the *revelatum*. The *revelatum*, God, is admittedly perfect; but His revelation of Himself is adjusted to the needs and faculties of man. He reveals Himself for the most part through symbols, visual, auditory or verbal; and the revelation is conditioned by the inevitable imperfection of the symbolic medium. Our Lord spoke in Aramaic, a poor language if we compare it with classical Hebrew, to say nothing of classical Greek. He spoke so as to be understood by an audience of Galilean peas-

ants. It is difficult to regard these utterances as possessed of literal finality. Their meaning has to be elicited progressively by an age-long process of interpretation.

But it is otherwise with our Lord's Person. For here we pass from a revelation by means of symbols to a revelation that is one with the *revelatum*, the reality revealed. Our Lord, incarnate upon earth, was God, the *revelatum* manifested as the *revelatio*. 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' The identity is not absolute, for Christ was man as well as God. But He was perfect man, and therefore the revelation of God as the God-man was unique and final. 'No man cometh unto the Father but by me.' Thus it is incomparable with any other revelation known to history. For this final revelation is not a memory of past occurrences. We are not thrown back upon the imperfect symbolism of Christ's historical acts and utterances. The Spirit of Truth is come, an abiding presence perpetuating through all time the revelation of Christ's Incarnate Person, 'to lead us into all the truth.'

CRITICISM, SCRIPTURE AND DOCTRINE

By S. A. COOK, Litt.D., F.B.A., Emeritus Regius Professor of Hebrew, Cambridge.

THE subject of this paper is the bearing of the criticism of Scripture upon Doctrine: our theological and philosophical doctrines go back to the Bible and to Greek and Roman thought, and we may therefore ask ourselves, to what extent do we suppose that they may be affected by Biblical criticism?

Now it is scarcely necessary to say how completely such a paper as this must reflect one's personal standpoint; everyone is inevitably influenced by the way he views the Bible and by his reactions to contemporary conditions. This is a matter of one's 'approach'; everyone has his or her own personal approach, and it may give point to my remarks if I observe at the outset that the question of one's approach, or attitude, or position proves to be not unrelated to that of the Divine Logos, or Reason, or Order in Nature and in Man. One's approach to the Bible is bound up with the Bible's approach to history, and so with the Christian approach to life itself through Christ as personal Saviour and as Logos.

I myself, as a layman, living a student's life, with none of the urgent practical problems that confront the parish priest, have been gradually constructing my own approach. I do not wish to be offensively autobiographical, but I may acknowledge my debt, first to heredity—to parents, one devoutly religious, perhaps a Fundamentalist, the other with liberal and scientific, if not rationalistic sympathies. I am indebted also to my early environment: Nonconformist and Anglican and Unitarian; politically both Radical and Tory; wholly non-academical and non-professional, but somewhat journalistic. I matured slowly, and not until I was nearing forty did I ever feel the necessity of setting my thoughts in order and finding a more or less coherent 'approach.' My work has been rather miscellaneous and to a considerable extent editorial and compilatory: the study of languages, the raw material of Old Testament studies, archaeology and comparative religion. I was fortunate enough

to have opportunities of following the Communist revolutions; this laid the foundations of a real interest in prophetism, true and false. Moreover, a share in editing the *Cambridge Ancient History* for some twenty years enabled me to grasp something of the great changes in antiquity, age by age, and sometimes even decade by decade. Thus Biblical and other studies, ancient history, and modern conditions have combined to give reality to problems of revolution and evolution, of Messiahs, prophets, seers and reformers. In a word, I found myself attracted to questions of change, whether peaceful or violent, of process and reality, of chaos and cosmos, and of ordered life and thought amid decay and death.

Leaving my personal *apologia*, I wish to suggest forthwith that the subject of this paper must be handled realistically as befits the times in which we live. We are to regard the Bible, not so much as a Sacred Book belonging to a distant past, but as our prime source for a lengthy period of epoch-making changes in history and religion, changes comparable only to what we are witnessing to-day. We approach the Bible recognizing that *objectively* it is part of a vastly larger field of history and religion, and that *subjectively* our own personal approach may be narrow and one-sided. In a word, we may be looking at a small part of the total relevant field and through sadly imperfect glasses, and whether we are concerned with the Bible or with modern conditions our 'approach' suffers accordingly.

How present conditions affect our approach may be summarized in the briefest terms as follows :

(1) The social-political situation is one of actual or imminent drastic changes ; this is no novelty in world-history and the Bible illuminates some changes that have made us what we are. We should face the situation quietly and confidently, but also intelligently and critically.

(2) There are forceful psychological and ideological factors : the collapse of the earlier tacit acceptance of political, social, economic and religious inequalities. In many ways the sauce for the goose has become sauce for the gander. There is a widespread awakening, a keener sensitiveness and self-consciousness ; a disintegration of accepted standards is confronted by a world-wide crisis in religion.

(3) In the sphere of science there are new ideas of the macrocosm and the microcosm, as yet of uncertain significance for the future of thought. They emphasize the human factor in our conceptions of the cosmos, and in this way combine with experimental science confident in its practical ability to change the world. The key to our further evolution, it is felt, lies in our own hands; we are actors rather than mere onlookers in the cosmic drama. Thus theory and action, thought and practice are associated: how shall we best describe the Universe? say some; how shall we make the best of it and improve it? say others. The two questions cannot be severed.

Next (4), the comparative study of religion is the study of what men have held to be most real and true. Barriers have been broken down. How is a man to justify his conviction of the superiority of his own religion, be he Christian or Jew or Moham-medan or Hindu? There is now a great mass of available material, raising questions of revelation, of types of theism, and above all, the problem of bad or imperfect religion, religion that does not seem to lead to a fuller knowledge of God, Man and the Universe. In the opinion of some of us here are questions that will be found to precede any conclusive discussion of doctrinal restatement and reunion.

Then (5), Biblical criticism is not only placing the Bible in the midst of universal history and religion, our religious and other conclusions have no ordinary sectarian or confessional validity, they aim at an objectivity that is laying the foundations of a new and confident type of religious realism.

Finally (6), we live amid contrary doctrines and conflicting -isms; yet in any -ism we repudiate we are sure to find driving-power, self-sacrifice, much that is admirable, and the recognition of the necessity of intelligible intellectual foundations. Our Christianity should be moved to jealousy. It must decide whether to dig itself in or to extend its tents. What part does it wish to play—not to-morrow, nor next year, but in coming ages? Christianity has a tremendous opportunity, but it is a tremendous task; and it may find that—to adapt the words of Jeremiah (vi, 14)—the hurt of God's people cannot be easily healed.

In general, to-day we have all our ways of approach and see things through our own personal spectacles. Everything is on

trial, penetrating if not harsh criticism seems to have reached the limit; not merely our glasses, our very eyes are being condemned, we may be suffering from some mental astigmatism! The question of *religious* doctrine alone is not at stake—it is the whole theory of doctrines, of ordering aright our life and thought in both the religious and the non-religious spheres of daily existence.

Such is the situation, and it is my fundamental conviction that the future of religious and other doctrines turns upon a proper understanding of their ancestry; a critical understanding of how we have come to think and believe as we do in A.D. 1939 points the way to the future. We must, I submit, start afresh from the Bible in the light of criticism; the Bible has been of incalculable cultural significance in the past, and continued criticism will give it a new cultural value. It will mean a new Bible.

The Bible is not a Book—over *there*; it is what it means for us *here* and *now*. This meaning turns upon the parts or aspects selected, so that our view of the Bible—like that of the cosmos—is the result of our approach to it. The Bible brings problems of history, archaeology, and psychology, the interplay of ideas, the testing and application of principles of research. All this is of cultural importance. The Bible itself covers some great periods of ancient history, but the interpretation of it also has made history. The Reformation may be said to mark a new stage in the history of the Bible, and the Reformers' conviction of its living, contemporary value was, broadly speaking, contemporary with the discovery of a New World and the recovery of the old Classical World. To-day we seem to have reached a culminating point in our knowledge of human and of cosmic history while, at the same time, the thread of history seems to be broken and the conditions of life and thought appear to spell chaos rather than cosmos. The future of Christianity, of religion, turns upon the interpretation of the Bible; and our doctrines, our dogmas, indeed our entire body of principles, tend to unite Biblical and non-Biblical thought. In this way, an 'old' Bible, *i.e.* the Bible of our forefathers, is being left behind, and we are moving towards a 'new' one, *i.e.* a new conception of its many-sided significance.

Our Bible is what the Book means for us; and this meaning

is based upon our selection and interpretation. The old writers themselves selected and interpreted their material, and we can see something of their aims and even their prejudices. We have to understand their point of view; hence—to take an outstanding example—if we agree that they saw the finger of *their* God in *their* history, we should ask ourselves, do we or do we not see *our* God in *our* history? They of old had their ‘canonical’ views of history, and these we have to criticize and, where necessary, replace by our own. Modern criticism has its own ‘canonical’ view of Old Testament history. It attaches a prominence to the exilic period and to the prophets, notably the Second Isaiah, which the Jews had quite forgotten; and we Biblical scholars would agree that our immeasurably more correct view of the course of events throws a new light on the past and gives it a new meaning. Again, are we to regard the Old Testament essentially as a ‘preparation’ for Christianity? Certainly we may, but if the Bible is to be of living interest it may, I suggest, also be regarded as ‘the Book of the Election and Rejection of a Chosen People.’ Bearing in mind St. Paul’s warnings, should we not reconsider our ideas of the old Israel and of the new, and of the destiny of that new Israel at such an age of decision as this is?

Sound criticism takes a hint from the prophets and is constructive and never merely destructive. ‘Destructive’ criticism may decide that this or the other statement or narrative is untrustworthy. This does not imply that the old writers were forgers or dishonest. If they claimed to know what was said or done, we ourselves to-day commonly claim to know what the writers meant. Both our ancient and our modern ‘authorities’ may be mistaken. Honest misinterpretations from the pulpit, the platform, or the study, and honest mis-statements by men of old can alike be extremely misleading, and—speaking generally—one often does not know who are the greater offenders!

In all the old religions we readily find abuses, defects and errors; in particular we frequently pillory what we call ‘Magic.’ Under Magic we include beliefs and practices that are futile and opposed to social progress; *e.g.* magical rain-ceremonies surely have no practical value. None the less they have persisted. Yet, just as a narrative may not be true to history but may be profoundly impressive and illuminating, so a ‘magical’ practice

may have had a psychological value quite apart from its practical effect. The value of the opening chapters of *Genesis* does not lie where past generations thought it to lie, we esteem them for other reasons; the magical practices which we repudiate for their futility can have had another value. Throughout it is obvious that if our criticism is to be sound, we require a well-equipped 'approach'; *e.g.* we have to formulate our ideas of Magic and of Religion, and of historical and of psychological values. In general we have to construct a body of thought that shall enable us to evaluate what is presented to us; it is necessary to build up doctrines and dogmas so as to 'approach' and handle our data effectively.

But just as we may consider some ancient belief or practice to be contrary to general progress and a hindrance to sounder knowledge, so our theoretical treatment of our evidence may be no less open to criticism. It would be easy to point to some modern doctrines—*e.g.* that of the priority of Magic over Religion—that are as much a hindrance to the progress of thought as the 'magical' rite was to past social progress. Each proves unpractical—for society or for thought as the case may be—yet both have had or still have a certain value of their own. Perhaps they are effective within limits, perhaps their value has been or is mainly pedagogical; but at all events our criticisms, our doctrines, our very attitude or approach to the past sooner or later make us reconsider our attitude or approach to the present and the future. In fact the three are soon found to be one.

In ancient Israel the Temple of Jerusalem was the abode of Yahweh; it was a guarantee of divine protection and help. But there came a time when it had become a sort of talisman, and Jeremiah warns the people to place no trust in those who were relying upon its presence (vii, 4): 'Trust ye not in lying words, to wit, "the Temple of Yahweh, the Temple of Yahweh, the Temple of Yahweh are these."' The case is doubly instructive. In religion, as elsewhere, what at one time may be a guide, an approach, may lose its earlier efficacy; it can be said of all dogmas, doctrines and working theories that what at one time leads may at another time prove to mislead, to lead away from the goal. How can we tell when the change comes? At all

events, the fact remains that the temple of Jerusalem itself, the centre of Yahweh's presence, became a kind of fetich, and Jeremiah denounced the empty faith in it; but subsequently in post-exilic Judaism it came once more to hold a central place. The process is extremely interesting; it concerns the reappearance or rehabilitation or restatement of what had previously been condemned or repudiated.

Let us briefly consider this process. The pivotal idea of the Bible is that of the God of Righteousness in History. He is in and above nature and man, and there is a rightness in all He does. The Deuteronomic and later writers treat this idea rather mechanically: all suffering is the penalty of wrongdoing, but righteousness will be rewarded. If you are suffering it is on account of your evil; hence when things go well evidently you are not taking the wrong path. The general idea is familiar and fundamental; things proceed smoothly because there is nothing to hinder them, but for all misfortune there must be some cause. Accordingly we can say that our convictions and presuppositions, our doctrines and working theories are effective, until there is some failure — is it due to their inadequacy or to external circumstances? It is the question of the efficacy or ineffectiveness of our doctrines that is here raised.

The processes of history have often been discussed, and in *Judges* ii, 11-23, there is a very interesting but extremely mechanical scheme which Biblical scholars regard as the Deuteronomic Editor's introduction to his account of the 'Judges' of Israel. Here the Israelites forsake Yahweh and are oppressed; they repent and he sends a judge who delivers them; they enjoy peace until once more they forsake Yahweh and are punished. Thus we get the cycle: apostasy, affliction, penitence, deliverance, peace, apostasy, etc. We regard the process as a cycle, rather than as a pendulum; and it is clear that we can conceive cycles that are not necessarily successive, but are still comparable, *e.g.* in the history of all reforms or revolutions. Now in *Judges*, where we have a succession of cycles, the events can be symbolized, not $a\ b\ c\ d\ e$, etc., but $a\ b\ c$, $a\ b\ c$, etc.; and since history never repeats itself, our formula will be $a^1b^1c^1$, $a^2b^2c^2$, a^3 , etc.; we have a spiral rather than a cycle. So in general we may have successive series, or merely series that are not neces-

sarily successive but are comparable, and also we can have comparable stages. In this way we may compare the steps leading to the exile and the Second Isaiah and those later leading up to Jewish Christianity; we may compare the ideas of catastrophic change and of a New Covenant both in the exilic age and at the rise of Christianity; above all we may compare the Servant of the Lord and Jesus Christ.

We now reach the highly significant conclusion that when we treat processes historically we may get, not some further stage $a\ b\ c$ and then d , but the old in a new form, $a^1b^1c^1$ and then a^2 , etc. Thus it is that the Temple after the Exile recovered its old prominence, and—to take a more recent example—mediaeval scholasticism after centuries of deliberate neglect is again felt to be important for modern thought. It has often been argued that the age of the prophets in Israel was followed by a ‘reaction’ in post-exilic Judaism; but what I am anxious to emphasize is that what *may* look reactionary *may* be the old in a new form, a new growth, and part of a new series; though obviously the ‘may’ must be underlined.

As regards the reappearance of the old in a new form, it is to be observed that Marxism or Communism has paid special attention to the process. Two of its fundamental ideas are instructive because as a matter of fact they point clearly to the possibility of a new stage in the development of Christianity. The one is the passage from quantitative changes to qualitative results,¹ for which we can point to the rise of Christianity at a certain stage in the development of post-exilic Judaism; it was a new growth with an entirely new series of stages. As has been recently remarked, it is possible to ‘prophesy’ by the aid of the Marxist dialectical method that the present immanentism ‘will be negated by a return in a new form of the older dogma of Being and Becoming, of Eternity and Time, of God and the World.’²

The other fundamental idea concerns the risk of ‘isolating’ our problems.³ This is a risk run by all specialist and intensive

¹ See ‘*Truth*’ of the Bible, Index, s.v., p. 343.

² V. A. Demant, *The Religious Prospect* (1939), p. 144.

³ See ‘*Truth*’ of the Bible, Index, s.v., p. 341.

work, wherever we reject or ignore what had been an integral part of the original context. So, Marxism itself, by concentrating upon its particular interests, has ignored the religious or spiritual facts in human life; sooner or later it will have to come to terms with them. The Biblical student may ignore the context of the problem he is studying in isolation. And in general we may forget or reject the original organism, the background to which doctrines of any sort originally and organically belonged. It is through such isolation that *e.g.* the Temple of Jerusalem had lost its 'spiritual' value, and that doctrines become emasculated, and lose their earlier vitality. It is always a question whether older elements can reappear in a new form, or whether to reassert them would be true reactionism; at all events we should never fail to contrast the fresh Judaism of the Second Temple after the exile with the more or less contemporary decline and decay of religion in Egypt and Babylonia where there were deliberate efforts to revive the past. With Christian doctrines of the present day I am not concerned; but I cannot avoid the feeling that ideas relating to existence after death and to Christ as an immanent cosmic power have become gravely weakened simply because they are isolated and are no longer part of an organic body as they once were.

Of the various ways of regarding processes historically the theistic has been the most fundamental. In early times, especially in the East, history is typically that of the gods. The gods are in their own realm, while on earth men are their human representatives, or they wear divine symbols, or they claim to be doing the divine will. It is an inevitable belief that there is a supreme rule or process: we may call it 'religious,' others will speak of the 'logic of history'; the Marxist, for example, will feel sure that he has found the ultimate secret of human progress. But entirely characteristic of the Bible is the conviction of the absolute transcendence and righteousness of God: whatever He is or does is 'right.' The history of Israel illustrates this conviction. Yet how diverse are the forms this conviction can take may be seen when men claim to be the instruments of the eternal process, when the Church is infallible, or when what-

ever the Dictator does is always right.⁴ In Israel the persistent emphasis upon Divine Transcendence and Righteousness overruled all else; and, suffering from defeat or destruction, she had to ask herself whether her God was weak or indifferent, or was she the victim of circumstances, or were her convictions of God imperfect? This surely has a significance for us, when things are at fault; are we to blame man's sin, or capitalism, or the Jews, or the forces of reaction and obscurantism, or what not? Is it at all possible that we have to purge and purify our own conceptions, and that the fault lies, not only or not necessarily in external conditions but in our doctrines, in the way we are seeing things, in our 'approach' to them?

Israel strove insistently to maintain her monotheistic convictions of God in history. Monotheism involves a reasonable adjustment of all departments of life and thought; and 'ethical monotheism,' which we owe to Israel, is an absolutely fundamental conception because it involves the right inter-relations between man and man, and between man and an All-righteous God. The approach to God is through Israel, His firstborn; and the Old and New Testaments are so united that this approach in the earlier becomes, in the later, through the 'Israel of God,' the 'body of Christ' who is perfect Man and perfect God, and the Logos or immanent power of Order in the Universe.

Now, there are certain aspects of the problem of monotheism which must be briefly outlined, since they concern the theory or doctrine that monotheism is the culmination of a progressive evolution or development.

We may start with the not unfamiliar view in modern books that the God of Israel was a local (or tribal) Kenite (or Midianite) god who became a national god and ultimately the God of the Universe. This theory, however suggestive, obscures some vital facts. Even if Yahweh were a local god Israel entered a land of ancient culture, in and around which there were and had been lofty deities and even henotheistic or monotheistic tendencies. Egyptian imperialism and in particular the universalism of the reform of Amenhotep IV (Ikhnaton) would encourage

⁴ Cf. Demant, *op. cit.*, p. 151, on the 'secular religions,' and the titanic conflicts which 'partake more and more of the nature of wars on behalf of the gods men fashion out of the created order.' He refers further to Voigt, *Unto Caesar* (1938).

ideas of a God of far-reaching sway, and the old nature-worship, notably the solar-cults, furthered universal rather than narrowly local conceptions. Yahwism undoubtedly owed much to pre-Israelite and non-Israelite Palestine. Moreover, instead of a simple progressive series from polytheism and local cults to monotheism, the former never quite died out, although to be sure the beliefs in numerous supernatural beings and in local places of worship were drastically changed. Even with the establishment of a great temple at Jerusalem and a monarchy, some sort of centralizing cult doubtless prevailed from the first.⁵ In fact, instead of a single particular development from a local or Kenite god to the One God of the Universe, we have the transition, through the entrance of Yahweh, from pre-Israelite and Canaanite religion to Israel's Yahwism. And this transition is subsequently followed by the purification of Yahwism and the change from pre-exilic to post-exilic Israel, and this again by another transition from post-exilic Judaism to Jewish Christianity and the new 'Israel of God.'

Here, amid far-reaching historical changes are three comparable transitions and certain progressive advances. There is 'ideological' continuity in spite of discontinuity, and there is the reappearance of the old in new forms. 'Progressive Revelation' is to be seen, not in the steps taken once and for all from a local god to the God of the Universe—a particular series that comes to an end—but in the restatement of inter-relations between God, Man and the Universe, and in the heightening of fundamental ideas of 'holiness' and 'righteousness.' Pre-Israelite religion with its many admirable features gives way to the developments within Israelite Yahwism, the lofty Israelite monotheism is superseded by Christianity, and St. Paul, keenly alive to the fate of his own people, warns us that the new Israel in its turn must be heedful and not boast. Thus we have a progressive revelation which is also an evolution; the fundamental features are familiar throughout primitive religion, and we need not suppose that the development or evolution which we trace in and behind the Bible has ceased.

⁵ This does not affect the modern *literary* view of the Pentateuch, etc., but it does imply a revision of the religious and historical development of pre-exilic Israel. See '*Truth*' of the Bible, pp. 61, 93, 129.

It has never been easy to maintain a simple monotheism. On the one hand, there is a continuous effort, *e.g.* in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, to maintain the sole sovereignty of God, and on the other is the question, Is it one and the same God that is being worshipped everywhere? The writer in *Judges* xi, 24, readily equated the Moabite Chemosh with his Yahweh; but could Israel at her best associate Yahweh with the Persian Ahura-Mazda or the Greek Zeus? The old Indian religion could affirm: 'to what is one the learned give many names,' or 'priests and poets with words make into many the hidden reality which is but one.'⁶ Indian religion is typically hospitable, in contrast to typical Israelite exclusiveness—'all sincere religious worship is a worship of the Supreme.'⁷ Could Israel have endorsed this? A famous verse in *Malachi* (i, 11) leaves it doubtful whether the widespread worship of the 'name' of Yahweh means Yahweh and not also other gods, or Yahweh under different names.⁸ After all, the 'name' of a god meant more than a label, it involved his nature and being; in any case it is an *Israelite* Yahweh, and to identify Yahweh too precisely with the god of any other people would be to strike at the traditions cherished by Israel. How far would Christians go in co-ordinating Christ with Buddha, Vishnu, Krishna or Amitabha? It is the nature of a god, the differing conceptions of which God is the centre, that unites or severs religions, and the future of monotheism turns more upon the convergence of such conceptions than upon questions of name and externalities of cultus.

Meanwhile old problems of monotheism are placed upon a new footing when we recognize that monotheistic trends may represent a psychological feeling rather than any explicit doctrine or intention.⁹ Hence monotheism is not to be regarded as the climax of a sort of linear development from polytheism: everything depends upon the place God holds in the life and thought of an individual, a tribe or a people. There were monotheising movements in pre-Mosaic and pre-Islamic times, but they did not make history as did Moses and Mohammed respec-

⁶ Rig Veda i.164, 46 and x.114, cited by Sir S. Radhakrishnan, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought* (1939), p. 308.

⁷ *Ib.*, p. 320.

⁸ See S. R. Driver, *Century Bible*.

⁹ 'Truth' of the Bible, pp. 179 n, 226 n.

tively. Moreover the monotheistic teaching of a Second Isaiah in all its richness would have been impossible centuries earlier in the age of Moses. Every powerful religious impulse has to work upon the contemporary conditions, and even when it loses its freshness, as it did in the cases mentioned, it does not leave conditions as it found them. The monotheising process must be studied before we can pronounce upon monotheism.

Now, there is every reason to postulate religious experiences and impulses among primitive peoples; but the farther back we go the less are we able to conceive what the contemporary conditions were. There is no necessity whatever to treat the earliest *recognizable* traces of religious feeling whether in children or in primitive peoples as actually the first of their kind. World-wide notions of the 'soul' and the analysis of religious experience would suggest that there is contact between man and the spiritual power we call 'God' before there is any explicit doctrine of the soul that can be styled 'religious.' If this is so, surely it is clear that our ordinary ideas of Revelation, of Natural Theology, and of Religious Knowledge—notably the arguments for the existence of God—do scant justice to the material supplied by anthropology and comparative religion. It seems clear also that even if we were to confine the idea of Revelation to Scripture, there is a profound progressive development in and behind its pages; and if we agree that the content of early Christianity was conditioned by the stage of thought 1,900 years ago, we can scarcely reject the possibility or rather the necessity of restatement at this epoch of world history after the lapse of so many centuries.

From an objective comparison of monotheistic and other doctrines it is possible to perceive how religious feeling has been aroused, guided and preserved by sacred localities, objects and ceremonies, by explicit beliefs and by doctrines and traditions. Israelite religion would tolerate no idolatry, but it is only fair to recognize that a visible object can localize, direct and be the centre of religious thought; even the rude fetich has played a part not always ignoble.¹⁰ But Israel's deepest convictions were

¹⁰ Cf. W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites* (3rd ed.), pp. 209, 568; F. C. Conybeare in the Oxford Congress of Religions (1908), ii. 179; also J. B. Frey, '*La question des images chez les Juifs*', *Miscellanea Biblica* (Rome, 1934), i. 145-180.

focussed upon her rites, her traditions and herself to such an extent that the prophets must protest and proclaim the absolute transcendence of Yahweh over the world. The exclusiveness of Israel, the insistence upon racial purity and cohesion, and the marital and parental relationship between Yahweh and Israel made Yahweh as it were 'immanent' in Israel. The interconnexion was like that between a School or College and its Head : how could there be a Head if there were no institution in and over which he was placed? The absoluteness of such a relation in religion is manifest when a Meister Eckhart says, 'If I did not exist neither would God.' It can, in fact, be another and more subtle form of idolatry when the invisible Deity is, so to say, embodied in a visible community or made unconditionally accessible by a ceremony or a doctrine.

This immanentism is more conspicuous when, as in the past, the name of a god might also be that of a tribe or of a city. But it always proves difficult to avoid the notion that there could be no God if there were no Israel or Church to maintain His worship, and that God 'begins' when there were men who began to frame the conception.¹¹ There is always need for the insistence upon the transcendence of the God whom the children of men honour in such varying ways, and we can understand the iconoclasm of the prophets when Amos associates Yahweh, not with the Israelite Exodus and Covenant at Sinai, but also with the Philistines and Aramaeans, or when Christ can utter the grave words, 'Depart from me, I never knew you.'

When Christianity inaugurated the conception of a new Israel on a world-wide scale and St. Paul went behind the proud traditions of his people to the First Adam, the father of all mankind, he initiated the conception of a universal history and religion which is gradually and unconsciously in process of being realized by our anthropology and our comparative religion, by our sciences and by our 'histories' of Nature and of Man. Thus does the history uniting 'Israel in the flesh' and her Yahweh

¹¹ W. M. Horton, *Contemporary Continental Theology* (1938), p. 118, cites from Rosenberg (p. 701) : 'The God we honour would not exist if our Soul and our Blood did not exist : so would the confession of a Meister Eckhart run in our day.' Certainly the God *as honoured* by the Jew or the Mohammedan or the Hindu would not exist unless there were those who maintained each his particular form of credence.

lead on to a new history of the universe, not necessarily a final one, but one that will represent the thought of this age as genuinely as did the myths and legends and compilations of the old.

To conclude : the critical study of Scripture involves the widest cultural problems. There are questions of attitude and approach, the way we see or view things, and the vicissitudes of our interpretations, theories and doctrines. The Bible—like every other object—is what it means for us. There are approaches that lead, and then perhaps mislead. Consciously or otherwise we determine our approaches, attitudes and doctrines ; they may be replaced by new ones ; there may be reaction, there may be restatement.

The only sound view of process is primarily theistic or monotheistic : a One and Only God of Righteousness means a Right and Order in God's Universe. 'God' is more than a name ; what we mean, what we think of His nature, is essential. Everywhere men need intermediaries, approaches, doctrines, but when we confuse means and ends, we may have idols that are not of wood and stone, but no less misleading.

In Christianity, Christ is the *personal* approach to a transcendent God. Christ is also the Logos, the immanent principle of Reason and Order in the world, in the world of nature and of man. Christianity inspires us to aim at a balance between the human and the transcendently divine ; it would thus unite our personal religion and our ordered thought in theology, science, philosophy, etc.

Edward Caud, in his Gifford Lectures on *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers* (1923, ii, 361 sqq.), observes that Christ was the one crucial instance of the unity of divinity and humanity, and what He could do was the ideal for all who followed in His footsteps. 'God,' he writes, 'is manifested in man under the ordinary conditions of human life, whenever man gives himself up to God. The power that builds and holds the universe together is shown in a higher form than by any creative net, in every man that lives not for himself, but as an organ and minister of divine love to men.'

To put it in utterly colloquial language : it is love that makes the world go round.

GOD AND NATURE—CREATION AND MIRACLE

By the Rev. C. F. RUSSELL, B.D., Headmaster of Merchant Taylors' School, Crosby, late Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge.

THE subject of my paper is 'God and Nature—Creation and Miracle,' and most of what I have to say will be concerned with miracle rather than creation.

The value for religion of the doctrine of Creation consists, I believe, in two things which it asserts about the Universe. (1) Its existence depends on the divine will. This is as against those who would say that it existed of itself independently of God, or of those who would assert that God in fashioning the Universe made use of a previously and independently existing matter. (2) The Universe is distinct from God, and must not be thought of as a part of Him. This is in opposition to pantheism. It seems to me that when these two implications of the doctrine have been grasped, we have got at the principal parts of its religious value. I do not think that it is any part of religious inquiry to attempt to answer questions about the nature of matter, or to decide between different philosophical theories on that subject. And so long as the value and meaning of the doctrine are found chiefly in these two assertions, I do not think there is much reason for intellectual difficulty, or that it is likely to be unacceptable to thoughtful people.

The difficulty in regard to creation occurs at a different point which is not specifically religious at all. It is concerned with the problem of time. Did the creation take place at a definite point in time? If we say that there was a definite moment of time at which the Universe was created, we at once find ourselves asking about what happened before. The difficulty arises partly out of the fact that we are dealing with something which is infinite, yet the thought of infinite space is not a difficulty in quite the same way. It is hard to think of space as going on for ever without any limit, and it is harder to think of it as limited because we at once ask what is beyond; yet it is not entirely outside

our power of imagination to suppose that if we went forward in a straight line we should never have any reason to stop. In other words, the idea of infinity is not so troublesome when it is ahead of us—whether it ought to be is another matter—as when it is behind; and in space you can always turn round and face in a new direction. As in time the movement is in one direction only; I find myself much more baffled by the idea of an infinitely extended past than by that of an infinitely extended future. That a thing should have no end is not wholly unthinkable, but that a thing should have had no beginning is. To avoid this difficulty various suggestions have been made. One is to suppose that time and the Universe began together, so that there was no such thing as time before the Universe came into existence. I think it will be best for me to say at once, even if I incur your contempt by doing so, that such an answer is to me entirely meaningless. Another answer is that the Divine activity in creation is continuous; and further that if it is continuous forwards, so that we can say that God is always active as Creator now, it is also continuous backwards, so that we can say that there never was a time when He was not creating. This may avoid the difficulty which arises when we place the Creation at a particular point in time, but of course it still leaves us with the problem of time extending backwards to infinity.

It is perhaps worth while to remind you that this problem of infinite time is not peculiar to the doctrine of creation. It occurs in other connexions, and most obviously in the whole doctrine of God. Statements such as that God is outside the time-process do not help me, and I would much rather say frankly that the problem baffles me than pretend to solve it by phrases which sound impressive but which as far as I am concerned have no meaning.

But I repeat that these puzzles do not affect the religious value of the doctrine of Creation, which is to be found in the two-fold assertion that the Universe depends on God and is distinct from Him.

I turn for the remainder of my time to the subject of Miracles, and I wish to remark at the outset that I believe the religious difficulties about Miracle are due far more than most of us suppose to the ambiguity of the word. It is out of fashion

nowadays to ask people to think exactly about the words which they use, and many find one of the great advantages of language to consist in its ambiguity, so that whatever has been understood by it, it can always be claimed that it really meant something else. But we are not here to adopt such modern heresies, but to do our best to think clearly and to make our meaning understood; and so I begin, as I have said, by calling your attention to the fact that the word *Miracle* is used in a great variety of senses, and that it is frequently impossible to tell, even from the context, what idea a writer or speaker attaches to it. I will give you first some of the ways in which the word is frequently used.

(1) By etymological derivation the word *Miracle* simply means something which excites wonder and surprise, and the word is still frequently employed with no other meaning than this. Such a use of the word is mainly journalistic, or occurs in conversation which adopts journalistic standards. An astonishing recovery from illness is often spoken of as a miraculous recovery; a hairbreadth escape is often called a miraculous escape. There have been several cases reported in the press during recent years in which a patient was supposed to have died, and subsequently the heart was made to restart by means of massage. When these cases are reported, it is customary to find the newspaper bringing in the word *Miracle* somewhere in its account of the incident. But it is not only in journalistic practice that this use occurs. For example, one sometimes finds in theological books a sentence like the following: 'A reconstruction of Christian History from which miracle was excluded would be more miraculous than the miracles themselves.' Now all that is meant in this statement is that, in the opinion of its writer, such a reconstruction of Christian History would introduce difficulties which he is not in a position to explain. It certainly does not mean that such a reconstruction of Christian History would make of it a miracle in the same sense as the miracles which the reconstruction excluded, and in fact this use of the word is merely on the journalistic level.

(2) The use which I want to describe next is rather difficult to make clear, and perhaps I shall convey something of my

meaning if I suggest that it is a use in which the word has come to have the same kind of value as a class name for the purpose of reference. Suppose that an event, recorded in the Gospels, has usually been considered a miraculous event. It is spoken of as 'one of the Miracles.' In books from which boys used to prepare for examinations on the Gospels you might have found lists of 'miracles,' which could be learnt by heart. When we open a book like Trench on the Miracles, we know what incidents will be treated in it. We shall not look in it for a discussion of the Parable of the Sower, but we shall look in it for a discussion of the Healing of the Man with the Withered Hand. In that sense the healing of the man with the withered hand is 'one of the miracles,' or is 'a miracle,' and it is customary to refer to these incidents collectively as 'the miracles.' Now when we do that it is quite possible that we are using the word merely as a class-name for a group of events which have been traditionally classified in a particular way, and we may use it without in the least wishing to pre-judge the question of whether a particular event in the group was actually a miraculous one. One man may believe that the man with the withered hand was healed by Christ, and may also believe that the healing was miraculous. Another man may believe that the man with the withered hand was healed by Christ, but may think that the healing was not miraculous. Yet they may both of them refer to the event as 'one of the miracles'; and if anybody asks both of them, 'Do you believe in the miracle of the healing of the man with the withered hand?' the second man will be quite at a loss how to answer. The first man will answer 'Yes' without difficulty, but the second man really does not know whether he is being asked about the happening or about its miraculous character. If he says 'Yes' because he believes that the incident occurred, he may give the impression it was a miraculous incident. On the other hand, if he says 'No' because he does not believe it was a miraculous incident, he may give the impression that he does not think the incident occurred at all. I have found this particular difficulty one which is extremely subtle, and again and again my own personal experience has been that when someone has been talking to me about miracles I simply did not know what he meant to say or what his questions to me signified.

(3) The next use of the word to which I want to call your attention is in many respects rather like the last, but there are shades of difference that are important. Everybody admits that some incidents of past history which were regarded by those who witnessed them or described them as miraculous would not be so regarded in the present day. Nature and human nature were then less well understood, and in the interval we have learnt a good deal more about both. These incidents would not be called miracles by anybody if they happened in our own day; yet the fact that they were called miracles long ago is not surprising when we take into account the smaller knowledge of the time and the greater credulity. Some of these incidents have come down to us in history under the title of miracles, and we may still find ourselves referring to them by that name. Perhaps in this case there is not so much risk of our giving a false impression as there was in the last, because we are now dealing with incidents about the interpretation of which there is general agreement, so that if I am asked if I believe in a particular miracle of that kind I know that my answer 'Yes' will not be understood to imply that I think it is miraculous, but only to imply that I think the event occurred. Still, even if the risk of misunderstanding is smaller in this case, I desire for my own part to avoid such a use of the word, and instead of calling such events miracles I would prefer to speak of them as 'events which were at the time thought to be miraculous but which we do not now consider to have been so.'

(4) I come now to that use of the word which I believe is in the mind of the *ordinary* reader and speaker when he employs the word miracle in a religious connexion, and with the intention of speaking as accurately as he can. I think he means an occurrence which could not have taken place without a special Divine interference with the ordinary processes of nature or human action. The 'human action' is quite as important in this definition as 'the processes of nature'; for while there are plenty of events which we can relate to the ordinary laws of uniformity as they are formulated in natural science, like the falling of an apple, the flying of an aeroplane, the digestion of food, there are other events of a normal character which cannot be explained on a purely physical basis because they depend

on human action. For instance, if I jump from my seat when I hear someone call out 'Help,' I am doing something which cannot be explained by reference to physical or even physiological laws, but only when we take account of the interpretation in my mind of the sound which I have heard. In jumping from my seat I am doing something which appears to contradict gravitational attraction, but we do not call such a thing a miracle merely because it cannot be explained along the lines of physical or chemical laws. We still regard it as normal and regular, and therefore in specifying what is meant by a miracle I have to take account not only of what are usually called the laws of nature but also of the laws of human action, and I say that by a miracle I mean something that stands outside both those sets of uniformities, and can only be accounted for on the supposition that there has been some special divine intervention to produce it—an intervention which has taken place on the physical plane. This, I believe, is what is meant when the word miracle is used by the ordinary person with an attempt at being exact.

I do not at the moment ask you to agree that this last definition of miracle is the best one. Perhaps you do not think it is, and perhaps you are right; but whether that is so or not, I do ask you to agree with me that this is the sense in which the word is usually employed, and therefore it must be taken into account for the mere purpose of making ourselves intelligible.

Even here we have got to distinguish between two kinds of people who use the word in what at first sight seems the same way. There is the self-confident person who considers that Science has already succeeded in formulating all its laws, and is prepared to say dogmatically that a thing is possible or impossible. On the other hand there is the modest person who knows very well that Science has still a long way to go, and that the best scientist is not the one who thinks that Science has spoken its last word. So when I speak of the word miracle as meaning an event which cannot be understood without some special divine intervention on the physical plane, I have to add that it may not always be possible to say of an alleged event whether it would or would not require such an intervention to produce it. It may be that even though Science cannot understand it to-day, it may do so to-morrow; and so in speaking of an interference with

natural law, I wish to guard myself explicitly from being supposed to suggest that the laws of nature are as yet perfectly known.

I have said that it seems to me important that we should face this ambiguity of meaning, and try, so far as we can, to dispose of it. It is absurd to discuss miracle with anybody when you are continually getting the impression that the word means something different for him from what it means for you, or what is worse, that it is continually changing its meaning as he uses it. Further than this, it is important to avoid ambiguity for the sake of the man who stands outside Church organizations. Even if we are not using the word miracle in the last sense of which I spoke, he will almost certainly think that we are, and it will be difficult to convince him that we are using it in a different sense, or to prevent his forgetting the fact after we have, as we think, made it clear. The ordinary intelligent reader believes that any theologian who defends miracle is defending this last meaning of miracle, and if he thinks so and is unable to accept miracle in this sense, he supposes that his view excludes him from membership of a Church. I wish, then, to choose some definite meaning for the word and to stick to it; and if my meaning is not the last one, I must be at great pains to make sure that the meaning which I do adopt is really grasped by the person with whom I am arguing, and I must, if possible, refuse to use the word in any other sense than the one I have selected.

What meaning ought we to adopt? I have already suggested reasons which make me think that the fourth one is the one most likely to make my statements understood by other people. But there is another reason which I would put before you in favour of making that choice: that it is only when the word is used in this way that there is anything to argue about at all. Miracle is regarded as a focus of controversy between science and religion, and I take it that in asking me to read a paper about miracle at this Conference those who asked me had in mind that controversy. But there is no controversy if any of the other meanings is adopted. Think of them one by one. If we consider the journalistic use of the word, in which it means no more than a surprising event, is it likely that anybody will be found to dispute the occurrence of surprising events? You will not get a

scientist and a theologian fighting one another as to whether surprising events have sometimes occurred in the past or may not occur in the future. Again, take the second sense in which the word miracle was used, as a sort of class name for events which had been grouped in a certain way in thinking and writing in the past. In that connexion I referred to the miracle of the healing of the man with the withered hand, and it is absurd to suppose that the scientist and the theologian are going to fight one another on the question whether that event is a miracle in that sense—in other words, whether it belongs to that particular group. If they dispute about the matter at all, their dispute is concerned rather with the question whether we should now wish so to classify it if we were starting afresh.

So also with regard to sense number three. No scientist or theologian will be found quarrelling as to whether some things have not occurred in the past which were believed in their time to be miraculous, but which we to-day do not consider to have been so. Everybody knows that that is the case. We can say too that most scientists, perhaps all, agree that the uniformities of nature have not yet been completely discovered, and that some things may be ultimately found to take their place within those uniformities, even though at the present time we do not see how they can do so. The fact, indeed, is obvious that unless we take as our definition of miracle the one which regards it as an event that cannot be fitted into the ordinary world of nature and human life, but must have involved a special divine intervention, there is nothing to argue about, no controversy, and no dispute between the theologian and the scientist. If anyone really wishes to adopt a different definition of miracle from that last one he is free to do so, but as soon as he has succeeded in making clear to everybody in what sense he is using the word, no one will any longer be interested in it.

I cannot help feeling that there are many devout Christian people who are not specially anxious to insist upon belief in miracle in the sense of an event which must have involved a divine intervention, and yet they are anxious to retain the word for its own sake, because of its traditional associations. They feel that there is real value in keeping the word, if not the idea, in currency. Probably we can all understand and to some extent

sympathize with this feeling, but none the less, I believe the policy is a mistake. It seems to me that if they are really prepared to agree that miracle in the sense of intervention is not to be insisted upon, it is far better to say so frankly and to let the word drop out of use. Any other course is bound to aggravate the difficulties which arise in making oneself understood.

Let me go on to say something about the present attitude of the scientist. In recent years it has often been said that scientists have changed their attitude in regard to miracle, and by this it is usually meant to be implied that the scientist no longer objects to miracle as he once did. I believe that this statement is entirely false, unless we give to the word miracle one of those other meanings which, as we have seen, cannot occasion any controversy. What has happened is merely this — that the scientist has become much more cautious than he used to be in making assertions as to what is, or is not, possible, and is prepared to find that his laws need to be revised. If to-day you tell a scientist of some alleged miraculous event in the past and ask whether in his opinion it could have happened in the way that is described, he may answer ‘I do not know,’ whereas his predecessor of a generation ago would perhaps have answered by a direct negative. But this is not an alteration in the attitude of the scientist to miracle, unless you are using the word as a class name of events which have been grouped in a particular way. When he says that the alleged event may perhaps have happened, what he means is that our knowledge of nature is not sufficient to enable him to say definitely that it could not have happened, but *he is as sure as ever that if it did happen it was not miraculous*. He is doubtful as to whether all the uniformities of nature have been correctly stated, but he is not doubtful that nature is uniform. He is willing to scrap particular laws if he is convinced that they need scrapping, but he holds as fast to the idea of law as ever, and it is his attitude to the idea of law rather than to particular laws which defines his position with regard to the miraculous.

It is sometimes said that the question of the occurrence of a miracle is simply a question of evidence. This is another illustration of a misleading statement — misleading because of the ambiguity of the word. The occurrence of an event may be

established by evidence and you may accumulate any amount of evidence, if it is available, to testify to that occurrence, but no evidence can prove that the event was of a miraculous character. If anyone chooses to be sceptical about the cures reported to have taken place at Lourdes, it may be an easy matter to confront him with such evidence as will convince him that the cures have taken place, but you will not therefore have convinced him that they were miraculous. So if anyone speaks about establishing a miracle by accumulating evidence, he is really using the word once more in the second sense, as a group name for a certain class of events in the past. Now suppose that this evidence is provided, and is of a really convincing kind, so that it becomes impossible for an honest person to deny that the event must really have happened, how does this effect the attitude of the scientist? He changes his mind on the question of the event's happening, but he changes in no respect in so far as any question of miracle is involved. As soon as he admits that the evidence for the event is conclusive he considers whether or not the fact can be fitted into the world of nature as he has hitherto comprehended it, and if it cannot, he does not for that reason conclude that the event was a miracle, but he simply sets to work to revise his formulation of the laws of nature which relate to it.

If I am right in this last point, that the most that evidence can do is to prove that an event occurred, but that it cannot go further and prove that it had a miraculous character, it follows that the difference between the man who accepts miracle and the man who rejects it goes much deeper than anything which evidence can touch. It is a difference in regard to a belief about God. I believe it would be a good thing to recognize this, and to bring to an end all arguments which are concerned solely with evidence, acknowledging that they cannot possibly lead to a victory on either side. If the evidence is shattered in the case of a particular event, the person who had accepted it as strictly a miracle may give up believing in that particular miracle, but he will hold to the possibility of miracle in general as strongly as ever. And on the other hand, if the evidence for an event is such that the scientist is prepared to agree that it actually happened, he is no nearer than he was before to admitting that the

event was a miracle. The difference seems to have to do with the way in which the two persons conceive of God's relation to the Universe, and I have long been quite unable to see why the conception of God which emphasizes a belief in miracle should be regarded as more religious or more reverent than the conception of God which involves a disbelief in miracle. The one side, to state the matter perhaps rather too bluntly, seems to emphasize primarily the Divine power; the other side emphasizes primarily the Divine wisdom. The one is inclined to say, 'What is the value of your belief in God if He is not able, when He wishes, to intervene and alter the way things happen in the Universe?' The other side retorts, 'What is the value of your belief in God if He is not wise enough to see to it that the uniformities of the Universe are adequate for all possible emergencies?' The former view, again putting it very bluntly, seems to me to imply a conception of God in which He appears as kindly but at the same time — may I say it? — a little stupid, continually taken by surprise, and (as it were) saying to Himself, 'I never thought of the possibility of that happening. I shall have to do something to put it right.' The latter view conceives Him as supremely wise as well as supremely good, imposing upon His Universe such laws as will never fail in their adequacy, and consequently never taken by surprise or needing to modify the arrangements which He has made. I know that those who disagree with me will reject this account of the difference between the two sides with indignation. But my object in putting it so strongly is that I may make it as clear as I can that I refuse altogether to admit the claim of the traditionalist that his view is necessarily the more reverent one of the two.

It is sometimes suggested that if the question whether an alleged event was miraculous is to be considered fairly, we should approach it with no prejudice or pre-disposition on either side. I cannot agree that this suggestion is justified. It seems to me that at this point we are bound to take into account the situation which is constituted by our use of a common language. How is it that when I speak to you you understand what I say? It is because our use of the same words has got behind it a common experience. If when I say to anybody, for example, 'It is a fine day,' it would be impossible for him to understand my

remark if he had not come to think the same ideas as I had done in connexion with words like 'day' and 'fine.' If it were not for this I should be as unintelligible to him as if I were talking Chinese. But as soon as we perceive that the use of a common language implies this background of common experience, we are bound to go further and say that the possibility of this common experience depends on the general uniformity of nature. If things in the Universe could happen anyhow, no common experience could be built up, and indeed our own individual experience would become quite incoherent. From this it follows that when anyone tells me about an event, the fact that I am able to understand his words at all is only due to my having got beyond the point at which the uniformity of nature is an open question. I do not want to press this argument so far as to say that his information could not convince me of the happening of something which was outside my ordinary experience, for obviously that often does occur. My point in the argument is less ambitious. It aims merely to make it clear that the uniformity of nature is to such an extent behind the possibility of our communicating with one another, that it does definitely justify the presumption that nature is still uniform in spite of the information that is conveyed to me. Or to put it otherwise, that it is *a priori* more likely that my informer is mistaken than that he is correct when he tells me something which would imply a departure from that uniformity. This is what I mean when I say that an initial prejudice against accepting the truth of a statement which asserts a miraculous occurrence ought not to be considered unfair; the fact is, rather, that it is the person who does *not* start his investigation with a prejudice against miracle who ought to be considered unintelligent.

It is open to anybody to remind me that the uniformity of nature is not proved, and is indeed not proveable, or at least that we have no ground for certainty that things will not happen in a way which will appear inconsistent with what they have done in the past. For example, no one could give an absolutely convincing proof that the sun will rise to-morrow. I suggest to you, however, that it would be singularly unwise to belittle the scientist's case on the ground that he starts with a doctrine about nature which is, in the strict sense, only a postulate. If we do

that, we are inviting him to retort against us that the fundamental doctrine from which theology starts is also no more than a postulate. It is not easy to prove the existence of God, by a proof which is completely convincing to everybody, and if you go further and assert that God is good or loving, you are certainly saying something which, as I think we all admit, implies an act of faith. Religion starts from the acceptance of a hypothesis which it claims can be justified by experience, and in that respect is in precisely the same position as Science which starts from the hypothesis of natural uniformity, and claims that it can be justified by experience. If religious people try to bolster up the case for miracle by claiming that the scientist cannot prove that nature is uniform, I feel strongly that it is a case of people who live in glass houses throwing stones.

I should like to add in conclusion that the view which rejects miracle in the sense of a Divine interference may include as definitely as any other the belief in the reality of God and His intimate relation with the whole of life. It leaves room for prayer and for a belief in Divine providence, although it may be that it does not conceive of their operation in precisely the same way as is done from other points of view.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE INCARNATION AND ITS PRESUPPOSITIONS

By C. J. WRIGHT, B.D., Ph.D., Professor of Systematic Theology
and Philosophy of Religion, Didsbury College, Manchester.

THIRTY years ago there was a very famous discussion, in which theologians, philosophers and preachers of the day took part, on the theme we are to consider to-day. The discussion was published under the title *Jesus or Christ*: but the title, though significant for the precise occasion and stage of the controversy, was incidental. The real issue was the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, what it precisely means and the grounds on which it rests. One other pertinent fact of history may here be fittingly mentioned. It was, I believe, in large part this same issue, so warmly discussed at, and subsequent to, the Modern Churchmen's Conference of 1921, which occasioned the Commission on Christian Doctrine whose Report was issued last year. These and other discussions I shall bear in mind as I proceed. But I wish—if it be possible—to rise above, or penetrate beneath, the acutely divisive issues involved. I have never been able to relinquish the conviction that completely candid discussion among Christian people is the way to agreement in a higher synthesis: or, in other words, that the dissensions and divisions caused by, and revealed in, truthful discussion are only to be healed by deeper and more truthful discussion.

I.

The specific theme allotted to me is concerned with the *presuppositions* of the Christian doctrine. In other words, it is the question: On what beliefs about God and man does the belief in the Incarnation rest? Or, if this way of putting the issue seems to prejudge it: With what beliefs about God and man does the incarnational belief cohere? It is no light or unimportant point which arises from the way the issue is put. Indeed, the way the question is put will indicate the conception of Incarnation maintained, as well as one's whole method of approach.

The real issue is this: How is our belief in the Incarnation related to our belief in God and our conception of man? But even this question, unambiguous as it may seem, is really not so. For we may either approach the idea of Incarnation in the light of a doctrine of God and man; or we may approach our doctrine of the nature of God and of man—including the nature of ‘sin’—in the light of a doctrine of Incarnation. It has seemed to me that the failure to reach real agreement—a failure which, in spite of approved formulas, has characterized, I believe, most Christological discussions, from Chalcedon onwards—is the result of divergent methods of approach. If only we could learn to put our questions in the right way, agreed-upon answers would begin to be possible.

Let me illustrate what I have in mind, and let my illustration be one not only very germane to your previous discussions, but, as I believe, to the essential nature of the issue involved.

The Christological controversy between the late Professor Pringle-Pattison and the Archbishop of York will be familiar to most present. That controversy left each thinker, presumably, where it found him: and the reason, I suggest, was that they differed in presuppositions and method of approach. Professor Pringle-Pattison, beginning from his acceptance of the view expressed by Dr. Temple—namely, that the doctrine of ‘substance,’ which underlies the Chalcedonian formula, is ‘in essence materialistic’—went on to complain that the latter did not think through the implications of his statement, or admission. The Chalcedonian definition affirmed that there were two ‘natures’ in the one Person of Jesus Christ, one ‘nature’ being divine and the other human. Yet, complained Professor Pringle-Pattison, the Archbishop still regarded the Chalcedonian statement as ‘an authoritative formula,’ and, in spite of its essentially materialistic character, as having abiding value in safeguarding the Trinitarian doctrine of the Incarnation. This Trinitarian doctrine of the Incarnation was thus affirmed by Dr. Temple: ‘The Incarnation was a reality, and not a sham. He who lived among men and died on the Cross was the Second Person of the Eternal Trinity.’¹

¹ *Christus Veritas*, p. 121; see Pringle-Pattison’s *Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 245 ff.

I think it is obvious to impartial interpreters of this very focussing controversy that Dr. Temple regarded the Trinitarian dogma—or, rather, his own view of it—as final, as for ever authoritative to Christians, and that the Gospel records of the Life and Teaching of Jesus have to be read in the light of it: while, on the other hand, Professor Pringle-Pattison sought to understand the Trinitarian dogma in the light of its history, and—so far from being legitimately used for the interpretation of the Jesus of history—as itself requiring reconsideration and reinterpretation in the light of the Gospel records. Dr. Temple *argued backwards* from the Credal statements to the Gospels, holding that when we come to interpret them we must remember that they are the record of the ‘God-Man’; and that therefore, as he expressed it in his own Gifford Lectures, ‘the psychology of the God-Man must necessarily be beyond our grasp.’² Professor Pringle-Pattison *argued forwards* from the Gospel records to the Credal statements, refusing to have the historical and psychological issues settled in the former *a priori* way: suggesting, indeed, that the dogmatic method of approach to the Gospels is to make of Jesus a mere conundrum. Dr. Temple interpreted the consciousness of Jesus as that of one who was both God and Man: Professor Pringle-Pattison interpreted the consciousness of Jesus as that of one who was in unique communion with God, or who was a supreme revealer of God. To the former the moral and religious consciousness of the historic Jesus is *sui generis*, and, in the light of ‘the Cross, the Resurrection, and the experience of communion with the Risen Christ,’³ the ecclesiastical declaration that ‘Christ is God’ is, he holds, reasonable and justified. (A declaration, by the way, which I have always regarded as both unscriptural and unorthodox.) The latter asks in bewilderment, ‘Are we really to suppose that God, in His infinite being, was in any sense locally and existentially present in the human frame of Jesus of Nazareth?’ and

² *Nature, Man and God*, pp. 325 ff. Nevertheless his view that ‘the psychology of the God-Man is necessarily beyond our grasp’ does not prevent him from asserting confidently that Jesus had a *memory* of a life in, or with, the Father prior to His earthly life. (‘As He approaches the glory of the uttermost sacrifice, He remembers a like glory which had been His, before the world was.’ *Christus Veritas*, p. 122.)

³ *Nature, Man and God*, p. 327.

declares that Dr. Temple's statement, that 'Christ is God,' produces upon some of his readers the same stupefaction as—to the agreement of the disputants—would have been occasioned in the minds of devout Jews had Jesus declared to them, 'I am God.'

Now I am not here concerned with the investigation and detailed interpretation of the historic facts about Jesus Christ as we discover them from the New Testament records: that theme belongs to the paper which is to follow. I have mentioned, and tried to elucidate, a modern Christological debate in order to substantiate the view I have stated: namely, that it is idle to discuss the Incarnation unless we can reach agreement on first principles. The differences to which I have called attention are very profound and far-reaching differences: they are not to be removed by superficial debates on the precise meaning of historic dogmatic formulas, or by modern adroit statements devised in the interests of the practical situation and serving, so often, as a cloak for profound disagreements. They involve nothing less than the question of the precise function and status of ecclesiastical dogmas: how far these may be taken as true: how they are related to man's moral and spiritual experience, and especially to what he calls his 'knowledge of God': and how—to come to the central point for us—what we call, in symbolic language, 'Incarnation' can be cogently maintained, or our belief in 'God manifest in the flesh' vindicated or validated. In the positive paragraphs to follow, I trust I may be sufficiently candid as to show where I myself stand on the issues raised in the controversy to which, by way of illustration, I have alluded.

II.

Any doctrine of Incarnation means this at least—that the Eternal God is manifest in, or operative through, a historic person. I do not, of course, propose this as an adequate statement of the Christian doctrine: for clearly some such adverb as 'uniquely,' or 'supremely,' or 'signally,' would have to be inserted. Nevertheless, it asserts the *main* truth to be expressed, namely, that the Eternal God has declared His nature and His will in a person who lived in time and space, or, as we say, in history. We Christians make this affirmation with respect to the

historic person of Jesus, the Christ. The question is: *Why*, or *on what grounds*, can we make such an affirmation? The question, we must note, is not: Do we assent to this or that form of trinitarian speculation, to this or that type of Christological statement? Nor is it: Can we differentiate, and, if so, how, between the concept of Incarnation and the concept of Immanence? These questions arise later. Nevertheless, they have themselves to be faced in the light of the answer given to the more fundamental question, which is: On what grounds can we make *any* valid affirmation about God? On what grounds can we make *any* convinced, and convincing, claim to have a 'knowledge of God'? The claim that in Jesus there is a unique Self-manifestation of God is clearly one which belongs to a family of claims—the common feature of the family being the claim that the Eternal God has revealed Himself in time and space to, and in, the human consciousness. However far one member of the family of claims goes beyond the others, it has this basic feature in common with them: *it is a claim that there is a witness to the Eternal Spiritual Reality we call God in a consciousness subject to bodily conditions.*

Now, in the interests of a 'nice and tight' apologetic, there have been, and still are, various methods of seeking to escape this inescapable fact (I mean this fact of basic family resemblance). It is seen in all endeavours to establish the truth of Christianity *on its own independent foundation*, or to ground the Christian belief in the Historic Incarnation *in itself*. There was, for example, the Scholastic—or, shall I say, the Thomist—method, which sought to establish what I may call 'a modal duality of knowledge.' The whole system of Aquinas is based upon the distinction between 'a knowledge revealed by God' and 'philosophic science built up by human reason' (*Summa Theol.*, I, q. i). Under the first kind of 'knowledge' come the peculiar dogmas of Christianity—the Trinity, the Incarnation, and so on. Under the second kind of 'knowledge' comes all such knowledge of God as we are accustomed to include under 'natural theology' or 'the philosophy of religion.' I do not, of course, suggest that to theological rationalists of the Thomist order these two were completely independent: Aquinas wrote his *Summa Contra Gentiles* as well as his *Summa Theologica*,

and the Roman Church has always proclaimed the necessity of a 'natural theology.' Nevertheless, the duality was essential to the system; and for this main reason Leo XIII and, later, Benedict XV decreed that the teaching of philosophy and theology in Roman seminaries can only be given by those who inviolately hold 'the arguments, doctrine, and principles of St. Thomas.' By this means ecclesiastical dogmas can, it is hoped, be preserved inviolate; for they are withdrawn from the kind of criteria applied to all that knowledge of God which comes by the strivings and intuitions of the human consciousness in time and space.

Another illustration of the same endeavour to establish the truth of Christianity on an inviolable, independent foundation is found in what is called 'Barthianism.' This also is grounded in epistemological dualism. The Barthian theology puts the knowledge of God, for which Christianity stands, in a category by itself, and, therefore, as not being subject to the tests to which all other knowledge of God has to be subject. (This position is most clearly stated in Barth's *Prolegomena to Church Dogmatics*.) Barthianism, while differing profoundly from Romanism in its attitude to 'natural theology,' has an agreement much more profound than its disagreement: namely, in its determined and tenacious proclamation of a two-compartment universe of knowledge. The respect accorded by Roman thinkers to Barthians arises from this fundamental agreement about 'infallibility.' The 'seat' of this 'infallibility' is different in the two systems, but that fact is less significant than the common declaration that such infallible knowledge exists.

Just here, as it seems to me, is the main issue. It may be called the problem of Authority: that is, the question of the *grounds* of belief—not, let us note, of the *psychological causes* of belief. It may be called the problem of Dogma: that is, the question of the *grounds* on which *any* theological statement is taken as *true*; not, let us note, the merely *factual* question as to what are the dogmatic statements which have commended themselves to a majority of the Church's thinkers in days gone by. It is, I think, necessary to emphasize this point; for the failure, or inability, to make this distinction is responsible for many of the *partisan* theological contentions of our time. How often, for

example, in theological discussion has the endeavour been made to coerce the decision by the appeal to some 'ism' of the early centuries! Or how often are real issues burked on the psychological plea that 'our age is hungering for dogma'—a plea to which all totalitarian régimes give first attention; a plea which is the concern of ecclesiastical statesmen but is not the first concern of those whose business is with Christian *Truth*. I do not suggest that those who make such endeavours and pleas are *consciously* protagonists of a Gospel of Escape. Nevertheless, implicit in their attitude—and a man's general attitude of mind is a surer index of his *real* beliefs than the 'reasons' he gives to himself for his beliefs—is the position that religious beliefs are of two kinds: first, those resting upon the grounds and subject to the conditions which render possible man's knowledge of God and eternal things; and, second, those resting upon grounds and subject to conditions quite independent of these. The first beliefs are usually called 'natural,' and the second 'supernatural.' The first are conditioned by human consciousness in time; the second are claimed to be exempt from that conditioning factor, or—which comes to the same thing—they are so far exempt from this conditioning factor as to be claimed to belong to a category of infallible dogmas and to have a kind of certainty and irrefragibility not possessed by the former. Corresponding to this distinction, and as a necessary constituent of it, is the view that there are two types of event in the universe: first, the 'natural' events, where the Divine activity is proximate, or indirect; second, the absolutely 'miraculous' events where the Divine activity is primary, or direct. For, clearly, the view that events are of these two types rests upon the view that they can be differentiated in human knowledge: otherwise no one, presumably, would maintain the distinction. Thus the absolute 'miracle' has always been 'the dearest child' of this type of apologetic, for it finds in 'miracles,' as Leo XIII said in speaking of the restoration of the system of Aquinas, 'infallible proofs of infallible truth.'

What, then, are the grounds and conditions which render possible *any* knowledge of God? Inherent in the claim man makes that he has some knowledge of God and eternal things is the faith that *God is*, that He is a *Living God who wills to*

reveal Himself, and that man himself is so made that he can know God when He reveals Himself, or hear God when He speaks. This three-fold assertion is a *faith*. It is not, and never can be, a logical demonstration, inasmuch as the Infinite conclusion always goes beyond the finite facts of human history or experience. It is, however, a faith which, as the theist believes, gives coherence and meaning to the universe as he knows it both without and within. He who believes in God walks, not by logic, but, shall I say, by a faith that makes logic possible.⁴ 'Nothing worthy proving can be proven,' as, you will remember, Tennyson truly said. I might add that nothing worthy 'evidencing' can be 'evidenced.' God could neither be logically proved nor scientifically evidenced without ceasing to be God—a statement which, to my mind, is as self-evident as the statement of the French mystic, 'Le dieu défini, c'est le dieu fini.'

This faith, I need hardly assure you, is the faith on which Biblical religion rests : that of the New Testament no less than that of the Old. It involves what we call the 'transcendence' of God and the 'immanence' of God. It involves, in other words, that the doctrine of God and the doctrine of man are inseparably interwoven. Neither can say to the other, I have no need of thee, for neither can exist without the other. Without the Living, Transcendent God there could be no *Divine Self-revelation*; and without man, created with a nature essentially akin to God's, there could be no *knowledge* of any such Divine Self-revelation. There is, therefore, a profound philosophic coherence in the fact that the Priestly writer of the first chapter of *Genesis* proclaims these two truths, so essential to all theistic religion : that the Living God is, and that He created man in His image and after His likeness. The God who existed 'in the beginning'—or, as we would say, from all eternity—expressed His mind in the created universe, and, supremely, in that mental, moral and spiritual nature which constitutes the essential man.

It is on this faith that any kind of Christian incarnational belief rests. Without it, not only has the specific Christian belief that God was uniquely Self-manifest, or uniquely operative, in the historic Person of Jesus Christ no standing-ground, but

⁴ cf. Lotze : the Being of God is 'the indispensable presupposition of all intelligibility in finite things' (*Microcosmus*, ii, p. 659).

without it that belief could never have arisen. To isolate the belief in Incarnation from the faith in the Living God who has made man in His own image is not only to distort it: it is to render it impossible or meaningless. To make the difference between 'natural' and 'revealed' religion an essential or fundamental one is to make *all* knowledge of God impossible. The supremacy, or uniqueness, of Christianity is not secured by such a dichotomy of religion: it is lost, or rendered meaningless—which is the same thing. As many of our ancient churches were built where pagan temples had stood, so Christianity stands upon the foundations which have supported all theistic faith and worship.⁵

It is not within the scope of this paper, as I have said, to consider the historical features of the life and teaching of Jesus, or to estimate the factors covered by the phrase 'the Christ of experience.' Here, however, I take for granted—despite the Christ-myth theorists—that Jesus was a historical person, the main lineaments of whose life and teaching we may know. Whatever we may, or may not, say about Jesus, we may confidently say that He was a real man, living in a specific place, at a specific time, and that the substance of His teaching about God and man is known to us. In discussing the presuppositions of a doctrine of the Incarnation that is all I require by way of historicity. As I see it, there is, on the basis of the Christ-myth theory, nothing to discuss: as, further, there is nothing to discuss if the position be taken of a Form-History critic who once said in my hearing, speaking of the Christ-myth theory, 'It *may* be true.' If we have no assurance that Jesus was a historical person there is no point in discussing a doctrine which is based on the faith that the Eternal can be Self-manifest in the historical.

Jesus, then, was a historical Person, living in time and place. He thought, He spoke, He acted. In other words, He had an interior life, which we call His consciousness, and He sought to express that consciousness in word and deed. Now the expression of anyone's consciousness by verbal symbols and outward acts rests upon the conviction that what is expressed will be

⁵ cf. Max Müller: 'Natural religion may exist, and does exist, without revealed religion: revealed religion without natural religion is an utter impossibility.'

understood by others. No one would speak if he believed that what he said would, of necessity, be incapable of being understood, or that it would, of necessity, mystify the minds of hearers. All volitional self-expression rests upon the hypothesis of the affinity of the minds of the hearers with that of the speaker. Minds vary, of course, in many ways—in range, depth, intuition, and so on : and it is never easy for a profound and original mind so to express itself as to be adequately, not to say fully, understood. Nevertheless, all communication involves the belief that, underlying the varieties of mind, there are basal affinities. While every person's consciousness is his own secret, and never in this life to be fully and directly shared, every endeavour to communicate it rests upon the belief that it *is* sharable.

The most certain thing about the consciousness of Jesus is that He *did* believe that He knew the Eternal God, and *did* seek, by word and work, to reveal Him to men. When Jesus sought, from out of the depths of His consciousness, to reveal by word and act the nature and will of God, He took for granted that He was not expressing Himself in, as it were, a completely foreign tongue. He expected to be believed or understood by those whose minds were open to receive. He did not adopt, or cherish, the authoritarian attitude—the attitude, that is, which grounds the truth of an assertion upon the mere fact that a certain mind, or body of minds, has declared it, an attitude which, in so far as it is not embraced as a mere psychological method, seems to me to be based on fundamental scepticism. (It is not without significance that totalitarian leaders are usually fundamental sceptics.) Like every other real teacher, Jesus believed that truth is self-evidencing, and that His own task was to quicken the hearer's mind that he would see the truth for himself. The knowledge of the Eternal God which Jesus claimed, He sought to have shared by His fellows.

I take it, therefore, that the whole Divine ministry of our Lord rested upon the faith expressed in the first chapter of *Genesis*. There is a Living God, and man has affinity of nature with Him. And without that twofold faith we ourselves have no ground for believing that Jesus was right when He claimed to reveal God. It is only because we believe we know what we mean by 'Divinity' that we have any right to declare that Jesus

was 'Divine.' Every assent to truth which is a *real*, and not just a *seeming*, assent presupposes a nature in which is implanted the possibility of recognizing truth when it appears. Whoever asserts that God is Self-manifest in Jesus Christ is at the same time asserting, by implication, that his hearers have the capacity to recognize the Divine. He is maintaining, in other words, what has been called 'the consubstantiality of the spirit in man and God.'⁶

III.

I have now to ask : What view of the Incarnation is rendered possible by the presuppositions I have sought to indicate or elucidate?

The traditional view is that 'Christ is both God and Man.' This is in accord with the classical formula of Chalcedon, and is, I find, the view of the doctrine given in the 1938 Report on Doctrine.⁷ In this Report, while there is a careful statement of what, it is said, 'the Church believes' about the Incarnation, no endeavour is made to set forth a coherent view of what is believable and the grounds on which it is believable. In other words, the Report but reiterates a traditional statement, and, while noting the divergences of approach and of view found both in the early centuries and to-day, gives no constructive statement and does not indicate along what lines the necessary synthesizing conception is to be reached by, and in the vital interests of, the future.⁸

The statement that 'Christ is both God and Man,' while devotionally and symbolically helpful, does not—as, I imagine, is obvious to all who have thought about it—meet the demands of clear, candid and cogent thought. In our own day it certainly does not belong to that class of dogmas which were characterized by Goethe as 'cradle-songs by which the teacher lulls his scholars to sleep.' For it obscures the vital point, that the grounds for a belief in the humanity of Jesus the Christ are of

⁶ Radhakrishnan, *Hibbert Lecture*, p. 103.

⁷ See pp. 72 ff.

⁸ I do not, of course, criticize the Report for this lack. The Commission was called to *state* existing views, not to *think together* divergent views or to construct a cogent apologetic. I recognize thankfully that the Report marks an important landmark in the road of progress.

a quite different order from the grounds for affirming His 'Divinity.' We believe that Jesus was a man for the same kind of reasons as we believe that we ourselves are men—He lived in time and place, had a body as we have, subject to the same limitations, had a consciousness which, both in regard to the world made known to the senses and in regard to the Spiritual Universe, *developed* as all human consciousness does. His humanity is affirmed on the basis of direct observation and irresistible inference. When, however, we affirm His 'Divinity' the grounds are not direct observation and irresistible inference. Such an affirmation is an *interpretation* which is bound up with, and has no meaning apart from, the kind of theistic faith I have previously described. If men had no conception of the Divine, it is obvious they could not have affirmed that Jesus was Divine. As a matter of historical fact, many, if not most, of the people who met Jesus denied His 'Divinity,' while no one denied His 'Humanity.' People, then as now, had different conceptions of 'Divinity.'⁹ There is—the point must be obvious—a kind of certainty attaching to an affirmation of our Lord's 'Humanity' which does not exist in respect of an affirmation of His 'Divinity.' In other words, the later affirmation is—if I may use the words of Professor A. E. Taylor—'undemonstrated and undemonstrable.' No so-called 'miracles' could 'demonstrate' it. It issues out of a *faith* that there is a Living God, and that man is so made that, in his finite existence here in time and place, he can

⁹ A great deal of confused and contentious thinking is caused by talk about 'accepting ecclesiastical dogmas in that sense only in which they have ever been held throughout the history of the Church.' Those who make such statements have themselves the most diverse conceptions of 'Divinity,' as is obvious both from their fundamental loyalties and from their professed, and unprofessed but implicit, speculative beliefs. It is unnecessary to illustrate the point at length. I give but three illustrations. You will remember how John Wesley complained that Whitefield had confused the identity of God and the Devil—otherwise they were in agreement in their beliefs. You will probably have heard of the Christian who said he had no difficulty in believing in the 'Divinity' of Christ, his real difficulty being in believing in the 'Divinity' of God. Another illustration along the same line of thought has recently come to my notice. The story is told by Archbishop Temple of the late Bishop Gore. When the former, on his way to the Zoo, met the latter and told him where he was going, the reply was, 'Oh, I hate the Zoo. It makes me an atheist in twenty minutes.' Such stories, which could, I have no doubt, be paralleled from the lives of those who formulated our ecclesiastical dogmas, illustrate what I have said—namely, that people today, as in our Lord's day, have different notions of 'Divinity.'

recognize those qualities which he calls 'Divine,' or those human activities which he asserts to be the Self-manifestation of God.

Now if, in respect of 'Divinity,' we isolate Jesus Christ from all other men, in the sense that He revealed qualities of life different in 'kind' from the qualities we have learned, in the long course of religious evolution, to regard as 'Divine,' we are really asserting, as it seems to me, not that Jesus is 'God' or 'Divine,' but that He is an unknown and unknowable X. We have withdrawn our assertion from the only criteria of 'Divinity' known to us. We have taken a leap into the dark; and the dark, not of faith, but of agnosticism or scepticism.

The plea is often made to-day by those who wish to maintain as unalterable, and as for ever to be imposed, the Christological formulas of the fourth and fifth centuries that, in seeking to be exegetes of the mind of our Lord, we must remember—I quote again the words of Archbishop Temple—that

'the psychology of the God-Man must necessarily be beyond our grasp.'

It seems to me that this plea misses an essential point, which is that only on the basis of a belief that the psychology of Jesus was kindred to, or in essential affinity with, our own, have we any valid ground for attributing to Him 'Divinity' at all. It is the formula 'God-Man' which has itself to be understood and interpreted: to introduce the formula in order to ward off psychological interpretation from the mind of our Lord is to retreat from the issue instead of confronting it. And, as a matter of fact, *every* exegete—whether he knows it or not, and whether his exegesis is decided or controlled by dogmatic formulas—seeks to understand the mind of our Lord on the basis of the only consciousness of which he has direct knowledge, namely, man's. For the dogmatic formula is itself a man-made formula: it did not descend ready-made from the sky, but was reached by the minds of men who sought to interpret, and believed they could interpret, the mind of Jesus on the basis of His words and deeds—on the basis, that is, of the facts of history. The words and deeds of Jesus could only mean something to those to whom they represented a reality, known, in some measure, to themselves. And it is because there were those who recognized 'Divine' qualities in His Person and work that they were able to declare—as, according to the Fourth Gospel, Thomas de-

clared—that He was *Lord for them*, and *God for them*. Let me quote some words of the late Professor Henry Jones which seem to me to penetrate to the heart of the issue and to lift it above mere secondary theological argumentation :

‘ All that is regarded as isolating Jesus, every difference which we would render absolute, every quality in which man cannot participate with Jesus in some degree, lies beyond man’s apprehension as well as comprehension of him. It belongs to the empty sphere which the imagination projects beyond the limits of even possible experience ; and it must remain as valueless for man’s practice as it is empty for his thought. That way lies the unknowable ; and the unknowable, even if it could be anything at all, is not necessarily divine : it may be something else. Nor is God unknowable if Jesus revealed him ; and Jesus could not reveal him by means of that which was unknowable in himself.

‘ Take all in a word : the truth in God’s breast
Lies trace for trace upon ours impressed ;
Though he is so bright and we so dim,
We are made in his image to witness to him.’

It is a familiar fact to all students of the formative period of our classical Christological dogmas that they were based on a view of the complete disparateness of ‘ Divine ’ and ‘ Human ’ natures. The Chalcedonian Definition confined itself to an assertion that ‘ one and the same Christ ’ is to be acknowledged ‘ in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation.’ The Fathers of Chalcedon—as is almost universally acknowledged to-day—sought to *get round* a problem, instead of confronting a problem. (Those who tell us they were all *really* in agreement mean that they were agreed in their decision not to try to *think through* the issue.) In their formula they concealed the divergencies of parties : they did not seek to reconcile them. As a result, their formula is a canopy under which divergent conceptions of the Incarnation can find refuge. Let us frankly recognize that, whatever merit belongs to such a type of formula, it is not the merit of coherence or cogency.

This view of the disparateness of ‘ Divine ’ and ‘ Human ’ natures has come down to us through the centuries. Sometimes it has manifested itself as the ‘ human and divine in alternation ’ conception of the Person of our Lord (the phrase is the late Dr. Gwatkin’s). This ‘ alternation ’ conception—which is repudiated, at least verbally, in the recent Report on Doctrine (p. 73)—has often, if not customarily, been regarded as strictly orthodox ; it was, for example, frankly maintained by Leo in his famous

Tome.¹⁰ At other times, this view that God's nature and man's nature are different in kind has manifested itself in the endeavours to *explain away* those human characteristics which all the evangelists attribute to Jesus. Our Lord, it was held, did not eat and drink for His physical sustenance, but in condescension to men, nor did He really suffer pain during the Passion (Clement of Alexandria): He did not really *increase* in wisdom, but only pretended that it was so (Anselm in *Cur Deus Homo*): He was not really 'ignorant of the day,' but had His own reasons for playing the part of ignorance (Bossuet). Such explicit repudiations of what we now regard as essential Christian truth were so common as to pass unchallenged.

It is, further, important to remember that 'Unitarians' as well as 'Trinitarians' at one time acquiesced in this view of the disparateness of Divine and human natures. Indeed, it was because they agreed with the Trinitarian view, as ordinarily held, that the compilers of the Racovian Catechism rejected the doctrine that in Christ there was 'the very essence of God':

'Two substances endued with opposite and discordant properties, such as are God and man, cannot be ascribed to one and the same individual, much less be predicated the one of the other.'

In passing, I would say that if Christians who repudiate this disparateness were to look dispassionately and truthfully at the 'Trinitarian' versus 'Unitarian' controversy, the issue would be lifted into a higher and more Christian region than, alas, it usually occupies.

To-day this view that Divine and human natures are essentially different is manifest in the frequent endeavours to maintain that Jesus was different 'in kind,' and not only 'in degree,' from all other men. I fear this distinction is a refuge from the task of thought. A distinction which has its source in our experience of the material world demands careful scrutiny. Further, the real question is: How do we know what the Divine nature is? And if, as I have maintained, we can only answer that question on the basis of a faith in the infinite value and significance of human life—in other words, on the basis of a faith that man's

¹⁰ 'The lowliness of humanity and the loftiness of divinity alternate with each other. . . . For each nature does what is proper to itself in conjunction with the other. . . . The one glitters with miracles, the other falls prey to infirmities,' etc.

intellectual, moral and spiritual experience is not a vain show, but throws light on Reality—to say that Divine nature is different ‘in kind’ from what our experience or knowledge affirms it to be, is a meaningless assertion. The discussion, therefore, becomes an unreal, and to that extent a false, discussion. Let me quote some wise words of Max Müller :

‘ We make the fullest allowance for those who, from reverence for God and for Christ, and from the purest motives, protest against claiming for man the full brotherhood of Christ. But when they say that the difference between Christ and mankind is one of kind, and not of degree, they know not what they do : they nullify the whole of Christ’s teaching, and they deny the Incarnation which they pretend to teach.’

The Christian faith in the unique, supreme, signal Self-revelation of God in the Person of Jesus Christ is not a leap into epistemological agnosticism. It is concordant with, and inseparably related to, a faith in the Living God, Self-manifest in history, the clue to whose nature is found in the deepest, or highest, levels of human experience. The Christian faith in the supremacy, or adequacy, of the Divine Self-revelation in Jesus Christ, while incapable of being logically or scientifically proved, has an interior validity of its own. It rests, not upon endeavours—always inadequate, however unavoidable—to give it a so-called ‘ metaphysical ’ explanation or foundation in Trinitarian and Christological dogma, but upon the historic Person of Jesus Christ Himself, coupled with the proved adequacy of His Life and teaching in the lives of the saints and seers of the Church. Our Lord’s unique moral and spiritual consciousness, His unclouded knowledge of the Father, His unfaltering obedience to the Father’s will (to which the Gospels bear unanimous testimony)—these have enabled His true followers to find meaning in that Johannine utterance, and to live by its essential truth : ‘ He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.’ The *unity* between Jesus, whom men saw, and the Eternal God, whom no man has ever seen, is not to be regarded as a unity of ‘ identity ’ or ‘ equivalence ’ ; no one who accepts the Gospels as substantially historical can so understand that unity : nor, I am convinced, was that its meaning to the Johannine evangelist. It is the same kind of unity as is expressed in those Johannine utterances about the relation of Christ’s disciples (xvii, 11 ; xvii, 21 ff : see also x, 16) : Christ prays that their unity in mind and endeavour may

be the spiritual unity already existing between Himself and the Father. The Incarnate One is, therefore, at one and the same time the manifestation of the Father and of that perfect relation to the Father which should be ours. No better symbol than that our Lord Himself used can be found: it is the unity as of Father and Son.

All our language, as all the language of our Lord, in this transcendent realm is necessarily symbolical. The term 'Incarnation' itself, like its twin term 'immanence,' is obviously so. Let us not try to hide this fact from ourselves and from others by making exorbitant claims for our 'metaphysical' statements, our speculative dogmas. Our 'metaphysical' Christological statements serve so often to delude simple men into thinking that they have found a basis for Christian belief uncontaminated by the relativity and finitude of experience in time and place. Our dogmas are speculative buttresses of a faith—the faith, primarily, that Jesus Christ is God's most adequate Self-revelation to men. To the true apologist for Christianity this faith is not made certain by 'metaphysical' constructions which have themselves a history. And it seems to me that to introduce these formulas in order to settle the real, the fundamental, issue is like trying to support the foundations of a building by underpinning it with the superstructure. I cannot, therefore, regard those who call superstructure foundation as the *true* friends of Christian truth.

The treasure of this faith is in earthen—very earthen—vessels. The wine is in old—very old and, I fear, very insecure—bottles. The task of the truly Christian thinker is, surely, not that of proclaiming the finality and irrefragibility of once-useful but now inadequate containers. Our dogmatic formulas are like our institutions—monuments of quickening ideas and of a living spirit which, alas, are now entombed therein. Who that is acquainted with the religious history of humanity will venture to deny this? And if we dare not deny it, why should we evade it? What Lord Acton said of the history of institutions is as true of the history of theological formulas:

'The history of institutions is often a history of deception and illusion; for their virtue depends on the ideas that produce and on the spirit that preserves them, and the form may remain unaltered when the substance has passed away.'

It is for that reason that the lesson-book for Christological thinkers is—if I may use a phrase of the late Dr. Hort, used by him in another context—not a law but a history.

That there is a certain agnosticism inherent in this view of our Christological formulas I am well aware. It is, however, a fruitful and inspiring agnosticism, not that barren and paralyzing agnosticism of which I have spoken. It is the reverent agnosticism indwelling all true forms of Christian belief. It is the faith which declares that God is not unknowable, but yet unfathomable. It is the postulate that God as immanent is the *clue* to God as transcendent—the clue to the whole, but not coincident with the whole. In ‘the structure and system of finite experience’ there is, we believe, an authentic Self-disclosure of God: adequate, indeed, to our human need, but not the complete measure of His Transcendence and Infinitude. Experience in time and place cannot *exhaust* the Reality of God: in its highest and deepest regions it *witnesses* to His Reality. The less distorting the human medium, the clearer and worthier is the witness. ‘The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord’ (*Prov.* xx, 27). Clement of Alexandria said: ‘the soul of the righteous man is God’s own resemblance, effigy divine.’ For that reason, when the Unique Son spoke with such intimacy, and with such dependence, of the Father, we do not, like the religious rulers of His time, dismiss the claim inherent in His life and speech as blasphemy: nor do we imagine, or imply, with so many to-day that the doctrine of the Incarnation is mythology rationalised into final, ‘metaphysical’ dogma. We say, in the symbolical language of the Johannine evangelist: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was Divine. . . . And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth.’ Or we say with St. Paul, not ‘God is Christ’s,’ but ‘Christ is God’s.’

JESUS CHRIST IN HISTORY AND EXPERIENCE

By Rev. Canon CREED, D.D., F.B.A., Ely Professor of Divinity,
Cambridge.

I.

THE subject which has been assigned to me—‘Jesus Christ in History and Experience’—follows closely in your programme upon a treatment of the relation of God to the world of nature, and it leads on to a consideration of the Holy Spirit and the Church. This is certainly a natural, not to say an inevitable, sequence for a Conference which, like this Conference, is seeking to grapple with religious issues in the general context of Christian belief. It agrees with the order of *credenda* observed in the structure of the Creeds:

‘I believe in God, the Father, Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth;
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord . . .
I believe in the Holy Ghost. . . .’

Natural as this sequence is to those who have been bred in the Christian tradition, it is only necessary to compare our own tradition with other faiths to discover that it is highly distinctive. The two other religions which come nearest to our own in their general framework of belief—Judaism and Islam—both pay reverence to a supreme prophet or founder, but neither the one nor the other sets its founder in a position truly comparable with that which Jesus Christ holds for Christians. Moses for Orthodox Judaism holds a unique place among the sons of men, since by him God revealed and promulgated to His people His own Law—a Law which, as God’s Law, is entitled to the allegiance of mankind. This Law has been held to be perfect and immutable. It existed before the Creation, and it will survive the End.¹ Moses himself is great, for through him God redeemed Israel from Egypt and through him God gave the Law. It would not however occur to a devout Jew to associate

¹ cf. I. Abrahams, *Studies in Pharisaism and the Gospels*, 2nd series, p. 125.

the man Moses with the ineffable name of God. If the suggestion were made to him he would instinctively repudiate it. All men—and Moses was a man—live at the human level, which is quite other than the divine level. No man—not even Moses—is a model for other men.

‘In the desire to counter the Islamic claim that Mohammed was “perfect man,” wrote Dr. Israel Abrahams, Maimon might be almost tempted to assign that rôle to Moses. But the Pharisaic thought does not, in the main, set up individuals as perfect models. It turns to God’s example in His attitude to man, as the model for man’s attitude to his fellow.’²

In Islam, as in Judaism, the supreme category of revelation is not the founder, but the divine speech or word revealed to and declared by the founder. This is already implied in the Kuran itself, and by about the end of the second century of the Mohammedan era the doctrine of the uncreated Kuran is firmly stated in an authoritative Creed.

‘We confess that the Kuran is the speech of Allah, uncreated, His inspiration and revelation; not He, yet not other than He, but His real quality, written in the copies, recited by the tongues, preserved in the breasts, yet not residing there. The ink, the paper, the writing are created, for they are the work of man. The speech of Allah on the other hand is uncreated, for the writing and the letters and the words and the verses are manifestations of the Kuran for the sake of human needs. . . .’³

The position of Mohammed in Islam is great indeed: ‘There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is the Apostle of Allah.’ But though Mohammed is one of Allah’s Apostles and the most chief of the Apostles, the Kuran, which is the word of Allah, is more than he.

In these doctrines—Jewish and Islamic—of the word or speech or law of God there are obvious analogies to Christian doctrines of Revelation. Christianity, like Judaism and Islam, has been spoken of as the Religion of a book and not without reason: for to the classical exponents of Christian Theology, the Scriptures are ‘God’s word written’; they have been held to be directly inspired by God and thus to be invested with an authority which, in principle, is inerrant. But what has been already said with regard to the Law of Moses and the Kuran will have brought to light an important difference between

² I. Abrahams *op. cit.* p. 142.

³ ‘The Testament of Abu Hanifa. Article ix. Eng. Trans. from A. J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed* (Cambridge, 1932). p. 127.

Judaism and Islam on the one hand and Christianity on the other. No Christian teacher—no Christian of any kind so far as I know—has expressed a belief that the Bible is eternal or uncreated. The Bible has been commonly regarded as an inerrant record of God's Revelation, but its nature and function have never been stated in higher terms than that. Uncreatedness and eternity are predicated not of Scripture but of the Word which appeared incarnate as Jesus Christ. This distinction points to a vital theological difference. Christianity has never rested in a merely transcendent God or an entirely objective revelation: while maintaining belief in the transcendent Creator God, Christianity is always seeking to unite this belief with the conviction that a more intimate relation between God and Man has been established through the historical Incarnation. It has strained thought and language to express the conviction that the distance between God and Man has been somehow bridged in the Person of Jesus Christ. The Bible is all-important because it is the inspired witness and record of this crucial union of God and Man, which has been realised on the plane of history. Consistently with this fundamental thought orthodox Fathers were not afraid to use language of deification to describe the goal of man answering to the incarnation of the Divine Word:

αὐτὸς γὰρ ἐνὴνθρώπησεν ἵνα ἡμεῖς θεοποιηθῶμεν

'He became man that we might be made God.'⁴ Western theology has usually spoken with greater reserve, but here too the thought that by the Incarnation a new relation has been made possible between God and Man remains fundamental: He who is Son in His own essential being has taken our nature upon Him that we through faith in Him may be regenerate and God's own children by adoption and grace.

It will be noted that this characteristic Christian belief as to the relation between God and Man brings historical happenings within the sphere of essential faith to an extent which has no real parallel in the allied Theistic faiths. Certain events form a part of what a Christian as a Christian believes. God is believed

⁴ Athanasius *De Incarnatione* liv. 3. Compare Iren. *Adv. Haeres* IV. lxiii. 3 (Harvey) non ab initio Dii facti sumus, sed primo quidem homines, tunc demum Dii.

to have wrought eternal salvation for Man through a person who lived in time, and who was put to death on the ground that he claimed to be King of a historical people. This truly remarkable characteristic of the Christian religion is not only of the utmost importance for our understanding of the religion itself, it is also noteworthy because it has helped to determine the character of our civilisation. It is not an accident that attempts to philosophise on history have flourished on Christian soil. We must not be misled by the observation that the founders of modern historical method, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Gibbon, were consciously attacking the received Christian scheme of history. That contest between the old and the new was inevitable; the study of history could not come into its own until Bossuet had been dethroned. This is to be acknowledged, but it is probably also true that the whole idea of a philosophy of history and the scientific treatment of universal history would never have originated at all, if generations of European men had not been drilled by Christian theology into thinking of the history of mankind as a unity with the Incarnation at its centre. The time came when the theological history would no longer serve. The Biblical containing vessel burst, but not before men had learnt to think of the course of events as an ordered whole. This they continued to do, though from the eighteenth century onwards they often tended to explain the process in terms of laws working within the process rather than, with Bossuet and Christian tradition, in terms of a providential guiding from outside.

Christian theology must find a way which leads beyond this antithesis: for it is impossible for it to replace universal history within the Biblical framework, and it is also impossible for it to acquiesce in a purely immanent philosophy of history. This however is a problem which, though it is closely related to the subject matter of this paper, passes far beyond it. Here we are primarily concerned with the implications of the new treatment of history as they affect our attitude to the historical Jesus Christ, who, as we have seen, is at once a person in history and the object of Christian faith.

II.

The events which produced the historical Christian religion have not changed and they can never change. Moreover we still know those events through substantially the same limited selection of writings which has always mediated men's knowledge of the birth of Christianity. What has changed is the presupposition with which the texts are read. Serious students of history are not usually sceptical as to the possibility of some real knowledge of history. But they realise that records must be weighed and that a margin of uncertainty must often be allowed for. It is the opinion of those best able to judge that in the New Testament documents, as in other historical documents, a margin of uncertainty must be allowed; and though this does not carry the conclusion that real knowledge is beyond our reach, it does introduce an element of contingency into a sphere where it is apt to be especially disturbing and where, in earlier days, thanks to the belief in the inspiration of the letter of Scripture, it was natural to believe that no such qualification was necessary.

III.

Some modern writers on theology seek to minimise the gravity of this change. But their efforts are fruitless.

There has appeared this year a long and considered Memorandum on the Report of the Archbishops' Doctrinal Commission from the hand of the Rev. A. G. Hebert, of the Society of the Sacred Mission, Kelham, prepared at the request of the Chairman of the Theological Committee of the Church Union, and published with the authority of the Council of that body. Fr. Hebert has earned the gratitude of British theological students by his excellent translations of several notable works by Swedish Divines and by his activity in promoting friendly intercourse between our own Communion and the Lutheran Churches of Scandinavia and Denmark. I feel sure that members of The Modern Churchmen's Union will not be deterred by the disparaging tone of his references to the proceedings at these Conferences⁵ from a grateful acknowledgment of these services.

⁵ A. G. Herbert, *Liturgy and Society*, pp. 13, 179.

On the Memorandum in general I would first say that I appreciate the understanding spirit in which for the most part it is written and that I am far from disputing that its author has pointed out effectively some real and serious limitations in the Report. It is for instance true enough that the Report says little about the historical background of our present doctrinal divergences, and I am disposed to agree, as I see my colleague on the Commission, Canon Mozley, is disposed to agree,⁶ that a little more elaboration of historical reference would have strengthened the Report at certain points. But of one thing I feel confident: the history of theology, to which Fr. Hebert makes appeal, would prove a most unsatisfactory witness for the defence of some crucial theses advanced in the Memorandum.

The Memorandum makes the welcome assertion that

'since the Christian faith is rooted in history, the books of the Bible are rightly subject to the most thorough examination of which historical science is capable, in all its branches—textual criticism, documentary criticism, the determination as far as possible of the actual course of events, the history of dogma.' It continues: 'From this it follows that the Bible's authority is not that of an "oracle" exempt from criticism, and that it is (and always has been) theologically wrong so to regard it.'⁷

If the latter statement is scrutinised in the light of the history of theology, it must be pronounced to be a dangerous half-truth. Classical Christian Theology has certainly not questioned the real humanity of the agents through whom the Holy Spirit wrought the record of Revelation and it has not in principle denied the legitimacy of thorough examination. At the same time it has consistently assumed, implicitly or explicitly, that the most thorough examination could only result in confirming the authority of the letter, since the letter of Scripture is itself divinely guaranteed by the action of the Holy Spirit. When therefore scholars advanced views which in some measure imperilled or denied the revelational quality or the factual truth of some part of the letter of Scripture, they very naturally exposed themselves to a retort from traditionalist theologians identical with that which Fr. Hebert himself, with far less justification, levels against the Archbishops' Doctrinal Com-

⁶ *Theology*, Vol. XXXVIII (May, 1939), p. 389.

⁷ A. G. Hebert, *Memorandum on the Report of the Archbishops' Commission on Christian Doctrine* (S.P.C.K., 1939), p. 22.

mission three pages after the passage which I have just quoted, *viz* :

‘that they come perilously near to sitting in judgment on the Revelation of God itself and on the faith into which we have been baptized.’

That is indeed a danger which waits upon us all, and Fr. Hebert has himself already incurred it with the rest of us.

The Doctrinal Commission took account of the problems raised by critical study of the New Testament and they made use of the words ‘symbol’ ‘symbolic’ with reference to certain narratives which, in their opinion, or in the opinion of some of their number, are probably not factually true. The Commission’s use of these words has been adversely criticised by Hebert. The Report does not always use the words in one simple sense; indeed it expressly recognises that they are ambiguous. Fr. Hebert cites this admission; and complains that the Commission does nothing to clear up the ambiguity. This neglect he speaks of as ‘tragical’ and he feels that it has left him no choice but to attempt the task which the Commission, ‘though they have provided some excellent material,’ have failed to fulfil.⁸

Fr. Hebert himself recognises two legitimate applications of the term ‘symbol’ :

(1) ‘A theological account of the Beginning and End of Time must of necessity,’ he says, ‘be expressed in symbolical, that is analogical, language; for the Beginning and the End, since they do not fall within the course of history, cannot be described in the “exact” or “scientific” terms which we use to describe historical processes,’

and he quotes with approval various passages in the Report which speak of eschatological beliefs as being expressed in symbolic language.

(2) He also recognises that certain events and certain actions within the time process are rightly spoken of as ‘symbolic’: as examples he adduces the Sacraments and articles in the second paragraph of the Creed. Here, he says,

‘a “symbolic” element necessarily comes in, but in a partly different sense; for here we are no longer concerned with descriptions in human language of transcendent and heavenly realities, but with historical events which are the *media* of the “direct impact” of the transcendent God upon the course of history.’ ‘In this sense,’ he says, ‘the Virgin Birth of Jesus was “symbolic.” A birth of a child from a mother without the intervention of a father would, as a mere physical phenomenon, have no more significance for us than the finding of a tomb

⁸ *Op cit.*, p. 35.

empty because some disciples had come and taken the body away while men slept. What gives these two things significance for faith is that the Child was "conceived by the Holy Ghost" so that the Virgin Birth was the means by which the Divine Person was born, and that the body was missing because the Lord of life was risen. Both these things then,' he concludes, 'are symbols . . . and they have meaning as symbols *only if the physical events really happened*' (the italics are Hebert's).

Finally he considers what would be the appropriate term to use on the hypothesis — possible in itself — that such alleged events did not actually happen. His answer is that the appropriate term would be 'legend,' *i.e.* as he defines it,

'a fictitious embellishment of history, which has for its subject matter some person or event in history but describes it in a manner which is factually untrue.'

In this way he distinguishes 'legend' from 'symbol' —

"symbol" in its theological application having for its subject matter something divine or heavenly of which it is either the description in human language or the medium of operation.'

Now with regard to this legislation as to the use of terms, I gladly recognise it to be a great merit in a writer to make it perfectly clear in what sense he proposes to use certain terms, and if Fr. Hebert were merely making these distinctions to explain to us his own usage there would be no ground for complaint. It is another matter when distinctions so individual as these are erected into a criterion by which to judge the statements of others. In actual fact a reference to the text of the Doctrine Report will shew that the Commission has not been so 'tragically negligent' as Hebert supposes; that it has explained quite clearly the nature of the ambiguity which it recognises; and that it uses the words 'symbol' 'symbolic' in a consistent way, and in a manner which accords with common usage, I quote from the Report (p. 37 f.):

'It is not the purpose [of credal statements] to affirm either historical facts or metaphysical truths merely as such. It is as expressions of the Gospel and of the presuppositions of the Christian life that the statements of the Creeds, whether in the sphere of history or in that of philosophy, have permanent truth and value. In that sense every clause in the Creeds is of necessity "symbolic."

'But the word "symbolic" is ambiguous. Statements affirming particular facts may be found to have value as pictorial expressions of spiritual truths, even though the supposed facts themselves did not actually happen. In that case such statements may be called symbolically true in a different sense. It does not appear possible to delimit with finality or precision the extent to which symbolic elements of this

latter kind may enter into the historic tradition of the Christian faith. The possibility cannot be excluded that in this sense also a symbolic character may attach to the truth of articles in the Creeds. It is not therefore of necessity illegitimate to accept and affirm particular clauses of the Creeds while understanding them in this symbolic sense.'

In these words the Report asserts a principle and makes a claim. In the application of the principle there is room for difference of opinion, and it is obvious that there was a difference of opinion within the Commission; but the principle itself and the claim which is based upon it are alike vital to the maintenance of a proper relation between scholarly study of the New Testament and Christian belief.

I will only add a word in vindication of the terminology of the Report. I take an illustration from a section of the Gospels which raises no very direct controversial issue: in the first chapter of St. John's Gospel the evangelist relates the Baptist's testimony to Jesus, and tells us that the Baptist saw Jesus approaching and spoke of Him as 'The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world' and as 'he who comes after me, who is become before me.' This is a narrative which few scholars would regard as factually true. It is very unlikely that John actually spoke of Jesus in those terms. It would not be surprising to me to learn that Fr. Hebert would not greatly concern himself to combat this well grounded conclusion. If he would not combat it, he would then, on his own usage, oblige himself to speak of it as 'legend.' I, on the other hand, should very much prefer to use the terminology of the Report. For to speak of it as 'legend' is merely to underline the discrepancy between the scene as it is described and historical actuality. If on the other hand one speaks of it as 'symbolic,' attention is directed to the positive meaning which the narrative is intended to convey, and which, though factually untrue, it does convey. The narrative is not merely a legend, for it represents or 'symbolises' under the form of a historical scene the true relation between Jesus of Nazareth and the forerunner.⁹

⁹ I am encouraged to observe that in the following section of the Memorandum (on The Nature of Sin) Hebert speaks of 'the symbolical truth of the story of the Fall' and this notwithstanding that in his Theology the Fall is certainly not the Beginning of Time, and that he expresses willingness to agree with the Commission that 'the doctrine of a universal tendency to evil in man is not bound up with the historical truth of any story of the Fall.'

IV.

We assert then that the principle of a symbolic interpretation may—nay must— be allowed in dealing with the New Testament. To claim this however is by no means the same thing as to claim that the New Testament or the Gospels can be satisfactorily dealt with in terms of symbolism alone. I believe that the direct contrary is the truth. Allow me to quote the Report on Doctrine once again and to make the words my own. Immediately after the words which I quoted before, ending ‘it is not therefore of necessity illegitimate to accept or affirm particular clauses of the Creeds while understanding them in this symbolic sense,’ the Report continues thus :

‘It is however in any case essential to hold that the facts underlying the Gospel story—which story the Creeds summarise and interpret—were such as to justify the Gospel itself.

‘Further the Commission is convinced that neither can the truth of the Gospel stand unimpaired nor can any adequate account of its origin be given unless the broad tradition concerning Jesus, to which the Gospels and the Church have borne witness through the centuries, is accepted as historical, and in particular unless it is possible for the Church to proclaim that in the historical figure of Jesus of Nazareth “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” (p. 38).

That affirmation in the Report balances and conditions the claim of the possible legitimacy of symbolic interpretation.

It is indeed very intelligible that the critical study of the Gospels, which by its very nature cannot refrain from calling anything and everything into question, should seem to some to call for a more radical and thoroughgoing attitude than that sketched in the words I have quoted, whether it be an attempt to go back on criticism and to assert the authority, in principle infallible, of the written word as such, or a tendency to give up as vain ‘the quest of the historical Jesus’ and to substitute a merely symbolic interpretation which can be indifferent to the question what measure of truth—if any—underlies the Gospel story. There may even be combinations of these two extremes. But neither of these drastic solutions will in the long run avail. There really was a man, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Mary; and throughout Christian history that man has held a central position and the decisive position in the Christian faith. It is patently untrue that the existence of religion is dependent

upon that man, but the burden of proof must lie upon any, if such there be, who would appropriate the term 'Christian religion' while disavowing dependence upon that man. If this is so, then Christian theology cannot be indifferent to historical conclusions about Jesus Christ, and though it may use symbolic interpretations about some things reported concerning him, it cannot accept a merely symbolical interpretation of everything recorded about him. *Pace* M. Couchoud Jesus Christ really lived and taught in Palestine and he really died crucified 'under Pontius Pilate.'

Of what he said and did in Palestine we have no strictly contemporary evidence. Our primary evidence is the Gospels. No experienced student of the Gospel texts will doubt that each of the Gospels reflects the interests and the point of view of its author or compiler, and of the community for which he wrote, but the recognition of this fact does not necessitate the conclusion that the Gospels are only evidence for the interests and beliefs of the age in which they were written, and such a conclusion I am sure would be erroneous. The fundamental explanation of the tradition is the original impression left by Jesus of Nazareth himself. The attempt to get behind our sources to 'the Jesus of history' is a natural and inevitable aim in any conscientious study of the New Testament. The attempt is never entirely successful, but it is not entirely a failure.

While this reaching backward from the Gospel texts to the 'Jesus of history' is, and must remain, one movement of New Testament scholarship, it would be a grave impoverishment of our study if we allowed ourselves to think of it as our only aim or as the only means to real knowledge of Jesus Christ. The most important consideration with regard to the 'Jesus of history' himself is the fact that he gathered a body of disciples which became a body of believers. Jesus Christ may be truly known not only from the tradition of what he said and did, but also from the faith and preaching of the body which he created. The New Testament as a whole is relevant as a means to knowledge of Jesus Christ. Our conception of him ought to take account of the fact that he was the centre of the Pauline Gospel and of the Johannine doctrine of the Incarnate Word. Neither of these could have existed at all, if Jesus himself had not lived

and taught and died. Of course the New Testament thought of Jesus did not end with his death : the Churches for which and to which St. Paul and St. John spoke were convinced that the death of Jesus had been both an end of one order and the beginning of another. In the new order Jesus was the living centre of a race remade, but he was also still the same Jesus who had lived on earth and died. In this sense St. Paul and St. John as well as the synoptic tradition may be held to mediate knowledge as to who Jesus was, what he taught, and what he did.

THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHURCH

By J. MIDDLETON MURRY.

IT is scarcely necessary for me to insist that I am no theologian; my acquaintance with professional theology is both rudimentary and haphazard. Yet I am not only as firmly convinced as any theologian that it is necessary to have a theology, but I also believe that everybody has one. It is (I suspect) hardly possible to be a human being without having a theology, unless we hold that an unconscious theology is a contradiction in terms. That may be true; but if it is, it is an unimportant truth, which, if unduly emphasized, conceals the important one which William Blake expressed in words which take on year by year a deeper and more urgent meaning :

‘ Man must and will have Some Religion : if he has not the Religion of Jesus, he will have the Religion of Satan and will erect the Synagogue of Satan, calling the Prince of this World, God, and destroying all who do not worship Satan under the Name of God.’

But the personal fact I wish to emphasize is that I am not theologically-minded : wherein, I suppose, I am merely the child of my age. By temperament, in a rather blundering kind of way, I am an experimentalist. At any rate that is how I started. I used to think it is a good way to start; I am less certain of that now. But I confess it is only in late years that I have learned, with considerable surprise, how utterly different was my education (which was pretty typical of boys in their teens at the turn of the century) from that of boys a century before then. Then theology was still the *scientia scientiarum*; all serious education had a theological foundation and a theological reference. This was borne on me yet again the other day when I was reading the life of a man whom I greatly admire, Frederick Denison Maurice. He began as a Unitarian, and became a Churchman; so did I. That sounds like a similarity; but it is an entirely superficial one. The difference between us was profound. He was a conscious theologian from the age of nine or ten. He had a faith and could give reasons for it at either stage. I, in comparison, was a complete pagan—if that is the right word. It is probably not quite the right word; I had some in-

stinctive values which were Christian. But of a coherent theology or theodicy I was completely ignorant, or innocent — and, as far as I can remember, though I may be libelling 'the Religious, Royal and Ancient Foundation' at which I was educated, no attempt was made to teach me one. In the article of conscious theology I was a *tabula rasa*, both at school and at the University.

I daresay if I were to examine such of my writings between the age of 23 and 33 as are preserved I should find in them traces of a gradually developing theology, though it is probable that if anyone had accused me of it at the time, I should have been indignant. Nevertheless, it is hardly possible to write, as I did in 1917, a book on Dostoevsky without some theological assumption. I was certainly unaware of it as such. But that book, which was not a bad one, was important to me. Through it I gained confidence as a writer. And the way in which it gave me confidence is not, I think, irrelevant to my great theme. I had chosen to write on Dostoevsky because his books made a deep and mysterious impression on me. They moved me, I knew not how or why. And I made up my mind to find out if I could. I had other experiences of somewhat the same kind — notably, I remember, in reading Milton's *Areopagitica* which moved me, again and again, to incomprehensible tears: substantially the same effect, I believe, as that which was produced upon A. E. Housman by the impact of pure poetry. But the impression produced by Dostoevsky was much more massive: his novels transported me into a world of experience in which strange and wonderful and terrible things happened with a logic which I sensed but could not comprehend. I wanted to comprehend it. So I read his books steadily through again, and again, and again — still, there was no light on the mystery. Yet a fifth time, under a kind of compulsion, I read them in order; and suddenly the illumination came. I saw, and I still believe I saw truly, that in each of them Dostoevsky was struggling, in and through the persons of his successive imaginary heroes, to answer the question: Is there a God? With a ruthlessness that now held me spellbound he was sending these children of his soul on a terrible quest through the waste-places of the spirit. I was thrilled by his tremendous courage; and, naturally, I

could not have understood it at all if the quest itself—the astonishing dialectic of faith and scepticism—had not a deep meaning for me. Nevertheless—and this is the point that interests me now—it was the total person of Dostoevsky revealed in his books which at once awed and comforted me. The moment came when my mind seemed to move with the motion of his so completely that I would say to myself: He must have said somewhere something to this effect, though I had no conscious memory of his having said it. I would search confidently, and I did not fail to find it.

The experience is now, after nearly 23 years, remote: and I am conscious of describing it badly. But it had a profound effect upon me. First, in that I wrote the book with an entire confidence, and without any conscious effort; second, in that I was aware in some sense or other largely of being a passive vehicle. For what? The question did not worry me desperately, yet it was never afterwards quite out of my mind; and I felt that there was real importance—at least for me—in the unexpected sensation that I was most myself when I was least myself. And again, the other incontrovertible sensation that I was, in some indefinable sense, in immediate contact with the person of Dostoevsky, set ajar the door to a new world of speculation. What is the nature of such a contact? In what medium does it occur? Another figure of the past with whom, after long labour, I had substantially the same experience was Rousseau; and then again, with Spinoza; then again with Keats.

The war meant for me a slow and grinding initiation into the mystery of evil. It was followed by an intimate personal grief that momentarily overwhelmed me. Somewhere at the back of my mind through all these five or six years was the thought that all my experiences—those of the kind which I immediately recognized as significant—were according to the pattern of the saying of Jesus: 'He that shall lose his life, the same shall save it.' And that saying fascinated me in a way I find it impossible to describe. My relation with Jesus of Nazareth, in so far as that relation had continued to exist, had always been personal. I had carried it over essentially unchanged from my very early childhood, when at the age of six I had formed the definite idea that Jesus was especially fond of

little boys and had taken it upon Him to defend them against the tyranny of a terrible old Man called God, who punished them for not being 'good.' Jesus, who somehow had influence over this terrible old man, had an entirely different point of view; because He understood little boys. He understood therefore that it wasn't in their nature to be good, and that it wasn't even their business to be good—they just had to be little boys: and He would see them through. This simple personal idea of Jesus had remained with me entirely unchanged by catechism and confirmation; it lay dormant, because I had ceased to be a little boy. Therefore it was never connected in any way with the second person of the Trinity. But now, after long abeyance, He was directly personal to me again. He was the man who had said words which I had come by experience to believe contained or concealed the secret of living: 'He that shall lose his life, the same shall save it.' Yet there, for a time, I left it. I felt that I had not the expert knowledge which would enable me to begin the task of trying to make Jesus real to my imagination. I knew the effort was unavoidable, but I avoided it as long as I could.

At last I could put it off no longer, and I did my best. The only positive clue I had was a mystical experience which had come to me at a period of great stress, of extreme alienation from all living contact with the world, and an intuitive forcing of my isolation to an extreme degree of conscious awareness. I knew by experience that a deep and overwhelming certainty of being under the immediate care of some utterly beneficent and all-comprehending power was possible even to a human being like myself; I could faintly conceive the possibility that a human being of another order than myself might live in complete loyalty to such an experience; that is, in perfect filial trust of the God who had clasped him to His breast. But, of course, the effort to conceive a Jesus who should be historically real, even on this basis, was bound to fail in this essential sense that I was incapable of imagining what might be the actual powers of one who was perfectly obedient to such a conviction. I do not think that the limitation was present to my mind at the time; I was too joyful at the discovery that when I applied to the Gospels the strictest processes of literary criticism of which

I was capable, there emerged from the confusion—or my own previous confusion—a Jesus who was credible and real to me, one with whom I could enter into the same kind of immediate contact as I felt I could with a Dostoevsky or a Keats. That was of crucial importance. It was entirely irrelevant if critics proclaimed that this Jesus was a figment of my imagination: I knew He was not that. Nor did it touch me that others said, more kindly but a little condescendingly, that this was *my* Jesus, How could He be everybody's Jesus? The marvel to me was that I had a Jesus who was real to me. He has been real to me ever since—not in the sense that the Jesus who is real to me to-day is the Jesus whom I tried to depict fifteen years ago. He has changed, He has grown, He has been alive, incessantly at His work of creation. With that work of creation, the rest of this paper is concerned.

The basis is for any conception of Jesus that is real to my imagining is His deep and overwhelming conviction, His incessant experience, of the truth of the Fatherhood of God. *Abba*, Father! Yet the history tells, and my deepest intuition certifies, that the inevitable end of the Man who first believed that so utterly that He lived His life in complete fidelity to it, was crucifixion. The terrible problem with which the imagination is confronted is: How can we still conceive the Fatherhood of God, when we discern that a life led in loving obedience to Him, did and must inevitably end in agony, dereliction, and death? I do not believe that there is any *formulable* answer to that question. There comes the moment when as it were the question is its own illumination: when we understand that it must have been so, 'from before all worlds,' that it stands in the eternal nature of such a relation as is meant by the Fatherhood of God that it should be manifested thus and in no other way. 'No man cometh to the Father but by the Son.' That is the simple truth. Just as simply true are the great words concerning the Father's presence in the Son 'reconciling all things to himself.' It is not at all that the Father is stern and terrible and just, and the Son gentle and loving and forgiving; it is that the nature of the Fatherhood of God can be and has been revealed only in the Son—His life, His teaching, His death.

But in this am I not evading the fact of the Resurrection?

Is not the central affirmation of Christianity that after three days Jesus Christ rose from the dead, was resurrected in the body. And if that is true, does not the whole weight of the emphasis shift? God forbid that I should re-open a millenium of controversy concerning the nature of the bodily resurrection. I have always felt completely satisfied by what St. Paul says of it in the glorious words which are read at our Burial Service. Probably, if we were to use our language of to-day in trying to express what St. Paul was trying to express, we should speak of the resurrection of the person. Of the resurrection of the person of Jesus there is no doubt whatever; it is compassed with a great cloud of witnesses, of which our gathering here to-day is one of myriads. Nor have I any doubt that it is true that Jesus Christ triumphed over death for all mankind. Every man who contemplates with candour and simplicity of heart the life and the death of Jesus is compelled at last to cry: 'O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?' For a blessed moment he sees through the veil of the temporal into the eternal. This is, I know, a different conception of the Resurrection from that which is frequently expounded as the orthodox faith: whereby the fact of Jesus' resurrection in the physical body is presented as the guarantee of the believer's own resurrection in the physical body. It may be due to some invincible limitation of mine; but this leaves me cold. If the fact of the physical resurrection of Jesus is a fact, I cannot understand how my own physical resurrection is thereby guaranteed to me. For that argument, or that revelation, to have meaning for me, I must read it imaginatively. 'By thy precious death and burial, by thy glorious resurrection and ascension'—those words have an illimitable depth of meaning for me—on the level of the imagination. But if they are literalized and physicalized, they descend into a kind of emptiness. I have in my own pedestrian existence sufficient experience of the extremer sorts of physical disequilibrium to know how dependent and how independent on the body is the spiritual person. That the physical body inherits eternal life is a notion of which I can make nothing; that the spiritual person does, I can assure myself every time there comes to me the courage and purity to contemplate the Cross.

These then are my data : a conviction of the reality of the historical life of Jesus, and a conviction that it flowed inevitably out of His conviction that God was a loving Father; then a sudden and tremendous deepening of this conviction, a changing of it into almost another order, by the realization that out of the very fullness of His obedience to His conviction that God was a loving Father, the Crucifixion inevitably flowed; then the inevitable transformation of this conviction into a realization that can only be expressed in the words, 'God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that all who believe on him might not perish but have everlasting life.' It seems to me that anyone who understands those words, or has a glimpse into their meaning, knows what eternal life is. As, indeed, St. John said : 'This is eternal life that they should know thee the only true God and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.' Eternal life is the knowledge of God as revealed in Jesus Christ.

By what means is that knowledge attained, how is that revelation accomplished, as it is accomplished, in the heart and mind and soul of every believing Christian? My answer to that question—and I do not pretend to know whether it is orthodox or not—is that the means of that revelation is the Holy Spirit. My mind gropes to render an account to itself of its own incontrovertible experience. The Son I know, through the Son I know the Father, but how do I know them? I cannot compare this knowledge with any other of my processes of knowing : it grows, it turns in upon itself, suddenly expands again, changes its nature, suffuses me altogether. If I speak as a man, or as a child, I might call it the supreme form of the process of Imagination. I am sure that it has an affinity of some kind with the process of Imagination, and probably is actually identical with what Wm. Blake meant by the word Imagination. For the Imagination was, in Blake's theology, self-substantial. It was not a faculty of the individual, or a condition which arose in him. It was an order of reality; in fact *the* realm of reality; when we entered it, we knew that we were members of the Divine-Humanity, 'the One Man, even Jesus.' Perhaps William Blake has come nearer than any theologian I have read to expressing what I understand by the Holy Spirit. For the Holy Spirit according to the words of the creed and my own conception, 'proceeds from the Father

and the Son.' The revelation of the Father in the Son brings with it as the necessary mode and instrument of its own operation, the Holy Spirit. So that the contemplation of God as revealed in Jesus is possible only by means of the Holy Spirit; but, in the order of psychological experience, it is perhaps true to say that the Holy Spirit springs from the revelation of the Father in the Son. The ever-renewed experience of the individual repeats the experience of the early Church; and perhaps is the rightful key to the understanding of its corporate experience.

The disciples knew Jesus after the flesh: so we try to do. That is the effort of the instinctive, irrepressible, inexhaustible search for the historic Jesus, which (in varying modes according to the age) is the starting-point of every great Christian renaissance. Thus the authentic seed of the great Franciscan movement out of which grew the positive glories of mediæval Christendom—the new personal piety, the universities, and the tremendous synthesis of Aquinas—was the imaginative hunger of St. Francis driving him on to rediscover the historical Jesus: who is surely no other than Jesus the man, Jesus the person. This effort, as I say, is and will always be renewed in the hearts and minds of Christians: it springs from the exceeding great desire to know Him after the flesh. But the flesh in which we know Him has put off the corruptible and put on the incorruptible: it is already a spiritual body. Our very effort to know Jesus after the flesh is and cannot be other than the effort to know one who is already, in some undeniable sense, a risen Lord.

That assurance came to the disciples in a time-sequence from which we are partly absolved. Or rather our discovery proceeds in a different, though parallel order. We know or seek to know him in the order of the imagination; but in that order, no less than in the order of the disciple's experience, the crucifixion and the dereliction of Jesus is a shattering blow. Precisely in the degree to which Jesus has been real to our imagination, His death is a supreme and irreparable catastrophe. It is only that which in us emerges, purified and illumined, blanched and bleached with tears, that can recognize in the spent and broken hero of the Cross the Son of God. And thereby we, with a

divine inevitability, live through in the terrible reality of the imagination, the despair of the disciples; and participate as brothers in the incredible triumph of the resurrection. As the catastrophe is absolute, so is the victory. Neither for them, nor for us, I am persuaded, is this glorious resurrection and ascension something which primarily happened 'out there.' It was, and is something that happened and happens in the world of eternity, where there is neither within nor without. And on this I would confidently appeal to the simple experience of the innumerable Christians who have undergone this thing. They die and are reborn: out of the darkness comes a spark which suddenly suffuses into one warm and living light which consumes all things and is all things. It is not something which happens *in* men: it is an eternal, all-comprehending happening which takes them into itself. And the risen Lord Jesus is the body and the form it wears. I shrink, in every fibre of my being, from grim discussions of the manner of our Lord's appearances; for whether or not the tomb was empty, the disciples' hearts were full. The Christian Church, if it witnesses to nothing else to-day, witnesses to that. By its very existence it witnesses to the sudden overwhelming of that little band of loving women and frightened but faithful men with the inexpressible knowledge that the carpenter's son of Nazareth, with whom they had walked on earth, was the only-begotten Son of God.

What they experienced in the world 'out there,' I do not know. I can hardly conceive that they knew themselves: that they gave many accounts which cannot be reconciled on the plane of the world 'out there' surprises me not at all. That here was the supreme irruption of the eternal into the temporal all my experience insists that I acknowledge. I cannot admit on the one hand that this suffusion of the temporal by the eternal could have been accompanied by phenomena such as the scientist could have investigated; on the other I cannot admit that the experiences of the risen Lord were so many subjective persuasions. What is crystal clear to me is that a band of rustic and unlettered men and women had to tell the world of an eternal happening—a task which has baffled and will ever baffle the wisest and most spiritual of men—and somehow they told it. And when they were first able to tell it, they spoke for

the first time of the Holy Spirit. They were filled with the Holy Spirit, as with new wine. They had somehow passed into a new order of experience, somehow been enriched with a new faculty : that seemed to themselves and to others to mark the difference between what they had been and what they were. It was the power whereby they recognized the Son of God in the carpenter's son of Nazareth ; it was the power whereby they proclaimed that recognition, by their lips or by their lives.

Thus the historical sequence of the passion and death, the resurrection and ascension is inseparable from the psychological sequence of the revelation of the Father in the Son operative through the Holy Spirit. The two processes are in truth one with each other, objective and subjective sides, historical and experiential aspects, of a single eternal happening. The nature of the Holy Spirit is—if the word may be forgiven—magnificently dramatized in the descent of the Spirit after the Ascension. The event of Eternity is spaced into the time process, and thereby made apprehensible. But in truth, if we understand the Ascension in its essential significance as the final fullness of the recognition of God's Son in the son of the carpenter, we understand that the descent of the Spirit and the Ascension of our Lord are simultaneous. As our Lord ascended, the Spirit descended ; nor could the one be without the other.

Thus the great trinitarian affirmation of Christianity—Father, Son and Holy Spirit—the Triune God is to my sense unassailable. It is eternally self-renewing. We cannot, any more than the disciples could, come to knowledge of the Father but by the Son, and we cannot, any more than the disciples could, come to the knowledge of that knowledge save by the Holy Spirit. Eternally, the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, and is together with them worshipped and glorified. Without the Holy Spirit no knowledge of the incarnate God is possible, nor is the incarnate God capable of being experienced by us except the Holy Spirit be joined to the Father and the Son—consubstantial and co-eternal.

This I believe to be the Christian conception of the Holy Spirit which is at once distinctive and necessary ; and it seems to me to follow that whenever the conception of the Holy Spirit current among Christians becomes vague, there the distinctive

Christian experience of God has begun to fail. We are no longer apprehending God as Christians must apprehend Him; and the power of our witness must fail because the source of it is no longer creatively discriminated. This distinction of the Trinity in Unity is, I believe, really the condition of that knowledge of the true God which, as St. John says, is eternal life. The distinction is essential to that knowledge in a peculiar and unique sense, which I have struggled to explain with a growing sense of my own inadequacy. As our knowledge of God deepens, so do we actually participate in the threefold life of God; and the means by which we participate is the Holy Spirit. When finally we reach the knowledge of the Holy Spirit, we discern that in some sense He was working in us all the while. It was He who led us to seek to know the carpenter's son; it is He who leads us into the all-comprehending world of the Imagination, there to seek to understand and enter into brotherhood with the great communion of the Saints, of whom most were uncanonized, and many unbelieving.

I may be wrong in my surmise that we are losing a clear conception of the distinctive nature of the Holy Spirit; but I confess that I was struck with the relative poverty of the description of the Holy Spirit in the recent Report of the Archbishops' Committee. Possibly the reason for this impoverishment lies in the difficulty of the credal description of the Holy Spirit as a 'person.' Few people can be expected to remain permanently aware that 'person' is a very inadequate translation of '*hypostasis*.' And it is inexpedient to insist that this is the case; because the Father and the Son are indeed 'persons.' The Latin translation of the Greek formula has in the case of the first and second Persons of the Trinity brought it nearer to the facts of the Christian experience of God; but in the case of the third, I believe, it has taken us further away. And I have the feeling — though in the nature of the case it is impossible to substantiate — that the time-honoured description of the Holy Spirit as a 'person' has powerfully contributed towards the evaporation of His distinctive reality. And in the long run that has impoverished the conception of the three-fold God. For if my belief is true that the Holy Spirit is the one means by which the full nature of the three-fold God is apprehended, a misleading description of

it is a permanent obstacle in the way of this apprehension; and trinitarian doctrine becomes a hindrance instead of an aid to the knowledge of the three-fold God. I suspect that this untoward personalization of the Holy Spirit helped towards the fearful over-emphasis on the doctrine of the sacrificial Atonement which is the blot on Reformed Christianity. For to personalize what is not essentially personal is not to help to realize it: quite the contrary, it helps to make it unreal. The historical consequence has been the reduction of the Triune God to a dual God—not very different from the same dual God of whom I have spoken as haunting my childhood: the terrible bearded old Man—Blake's Nobodaddy—and his kind and gentle son who protected us from him. That childish notion of mine is not so remote from the particular brand of Evangelical Christianity that was all-powerful in the Church of England during most of the nineteenth century.

That, thank God, has disappeared; and so, very largely, has the grim perversion of the Pauline experience of Faith on which it rested. But men have abandoned it, in the main, not for a deeper and truer conception of God, but for atheism, or a vague pantheism. We can hardly be said to have returned to a fuller conception of the three-fold God. To this I believe we shall one day come, because we must. And I believe that it is by a truer conception and a fuller experience of the Holy Spirit that we shall come to it. I cannot separate these two: to conceive the Holy Spirit truly is to experience it more fully. And the conception and the experience (I am convinced) are both alike distinctive.

The Report on Doctrine makes a too brief reference to St. Paul's doctrine of the Holy Spirit as the means of sanctification, 'which is not merely goodness but a higher, spiritual stage of development, so distinct that St. Paul could only regard it as a new creation.' That is true; but it needed more emphasis, of a kind which would have precluded the rather lame and impotent conclusion that 'it is clear, therefore, that the Christian conception of the Spirit is different from that of a Life Force or of a Soul of the World.' I can hardly believe that anyone supposed that they were the same. The *Geist* of German idealistic philosophy and the *Heilige Geist* are different things.

In the same sense that Christianity is a religion with its roots in history, and is denatured whenever this is forgotten, so the effective reality of the Holy Spirit is imperilled when the occasion of its historical manifestation ceases to be renewed. It was and is that power of God whereby the Father was recognized in the Son; it was born with that recognition and is the medium of that recognition. Therefore, alike in history and theory, inspiration by the Holy Spirit is the prerogative of the Christian Church. But that truth is valid only so long as the Christian Church is in fact the gathering of those who do by an ever-renewed act of apprehension of the eternal truth, recognize the Father in the Son. In this sense the possession of the Holy Spirit is the criterion of the authenticity of the visible Church. No doubt the criterion is almost impossible to apply, but the knowledge that this is the true order—that the Holy Spirit judges the Church, not the Church the Holy Spirit—must always be at work to release men from the subtle secularization of the false order. The Church in this respect fulfils its mission so long as it acts as the guardian of the historical creeds and the two great sacraments—of baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the Eucharist whereby we enter into the reality of the Name. These are indeed only means and appliances to the knowledge of the three-fold God; but they cannot be truly considered apart from the divine necessity whereby they were created to satisfy the needs of a Church which was once filled with the Holy Spirit.

If, as St. John tells me and I believe, the knowledge of God is eternal life—if in apprehending the Father through the Son and both through the Holy Spirit we are gathered into the eternal reality, the fount of all being, and participate in the Imagination which 'is not a state, but is the Human Existence itself,' to use the words of Blake: then the problem remains how this omnipresent Truth is the ground and essence of all reality. As I am incapable of answering that problem, I do not propose to attempt to do so. I can hardly do more than declare my firm persuasion that it is so. But it is to me a fact of experience that it is possible to contemplate any particle of existent reality *sub specie aeternitatis* in an act of impersonal spiritual apprehension: this condition of lucid contemplation, wherein

the self is entirely surpassed, is indeed spiritual, though not consciously derivative from the Holy Spirit. And, according to my theology, it is of this condition that the Holy Spirit is the propagator and the archetype. To apprehend the Triune God in the Holy Spirit is to be directly aware of the systole and diastole, to see into the pulsing heart, of the Light and Life which, sweeping out in waves, sustain the whole created Universe. Whenever and wherever we are overwhelmed by an apprehension of the power which informs and sustains every atom of creation, withholding it from the abyss of not-being by an eternal act of love; whether we apprehend this directly or by the revealing word of another — in the creative act of the artist, through the vision of the man of science, or in the simple self-forgetful gesture of the common man — we come within the working of the Holy Spirit, which will, if we are faithful to the light vouchsafed to us, infallibly bear us on to knowledge of the Triune God, who is the Light and Life whence all life and all light proceed.

THE MINISTRY AND SACRAMENTS OF A COMPREHENSIVE CHURCH

By the Rt. Rev. W. G. WHITTINGHAM, D.D., Bishop of St. Edmundsbury
and Ipswich.

THE subject given to me is evidently intended to be treated from a practical point of view. There would be little gain to a cause which we all have at heart in an attempt to formulate a theoretical statement of what an ideal Church might be. I feel sure I am interpreting the mind of this Conference rightly if I consider how the Ministries of all the important bodies of Christians among us could be admitted as Ministries of the Christian Church and what bearing such a recognition would have on the administration of the Sacraments.

At the outset I wish to call attention to a distinction which I think is worth marking in this connection, the distinction between ministering in the congregation, and the function of order and government. To minister in the congregation is one function; to determine the order, to decide upon the expression of the doctrine that is implicit in the Church's teaching and the rules which are to be observed by her members, and in the ordering of her Services, and to administer those rules is a separate function, and the two functions may well be considered separately. It is the actual work of the Ministry in the congregation and in pastoral care of the people that I propose first to consider.

The Lambeth Conference of 1920 made the following all-important statement :

'We acknowledge all those who believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, and have been baptized into the Name of the Holy Trinity, as sharing with us membership in the universal Church of Christ which is His Body.'

The Lambeth Conference of 1930 adopted this statement and endorsed it. So far as membership is concerned it goes a long way towards the recognition of a Comprehensive Church which may be said to be implied in it. But when it has come to the consideration of the ministry there has been always something

added which detracts from its value; something more has been required, agreement on a Common Creed embodying certain statements of doctrine, the acceptance of Episcopacy, the two Sacraments and the Holy Scripture.

The essential common element among Christians is the possession of a common ideal, the effort to possess it and to grow in the possession of it, the effort to make that ideal prevail — the ideal of the Christian life and the possession of the Christian spirit. These are the essential things that unite Christians. A Comprehensive Church must consist of all who profess and call themselves Christians.

The attempt of the Lambeth Conference to find a basis for a re-united Church was not content with the essentials. It added to the profession of a simple faith implicit in its declaration and recognized as adequate for membership, a demand for agreement upon what is machinery, the means whereby the Christian ideal is proclaimed and perfected and the Christian spirit supported. But 'the wind bloweth where it listeth' and the Spirit of Christ is not bound by machinery, and our failure in respect of reunion is due to our imperfect recognition of this fact.

Now if recognition is given to the membership in the universal Church of all baptized believers, whether they belong to an episcopal Church or not, on what ground can we refuse to recognize the Non-Episcopal ministries of the branches of the Church to which many baptized believers belong? That there is a large section of our fellow-Churchmen which still regards episcopacy as of Divine appointment, ordained by Christ Himself, its authority being necessary for any regular ministry and for any valid sacrament, is obvious. But it is clear that such a claim for episcopacy cannot be sustained to-day. To have laid down the lines of Church government and to have required a particular type of organization is something quite alien to the whole trend of our Lord's teaching, which it is impossible to accept as having been ordained by Him. It would have been to pick up afresh the threads of the Jewish system with which so much of His teaching was in conflict. On the other hand He gave an explicit test characteristic of a true ministry, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' And it is indeed remarkable that a membership should be recognized which is the fruit of

Non-Episcopal Ministries, and yet the ministry itself which has furnished these fruits as a token of its authority, a ministry which satisfies this test of our Lord's, should not have its authority recognized. The test of fruits was the test our Lord imposed and there is no evidence that He added any conditions as essential to the ministry or even contemplated its organization. And it has become plain that the earliest form of Church government did not possess the three orders of ministers and that the Episcopal system was an early development in the course of the Church's history.

The Report of the Doctrinal Commission frankly recognizes the impossibility of substantiating historically the episcopal claim to be of our Lord's appointment. And it admits that precedents can no longer be regarded as decisive for all time. It therefore builds its argument for episcopacy mainly on its value as an organ of unity and continuity, and lays some stress on its importance from both points of view. In 1920 the appeal to all Christian people issued by the Lambeth Conference, recognizing the spiritual reality of the non-episcopal communions proposed a form of mutual recognition the ultimate result of which would be to bring all the great bodies of independent Churches under episcopal rule, without requiring any particular definition of what the force of the episcopal ordination should imply, beyond its acceptance as historically ancient, going back to at least the first century and giving the mark of unity in organization which is desired.

When this appeal was first issued the recognition of the independent Churches was so fresh and so cordial that it appeared likely to go a long way to find among non-episcopal Churches the response it sought. Soon, however, the implications of accepting episcopacy seemed more serious and less likely to prove acceptable. I confess it seems to me quite improbable that reunion on this proposal will be effected. Free Churchmen have a history of their own, and the results of their ministry are as proved and as spiritually powerful as our own.

Our object, then, should be to insist on what the Lambeth Conference recognized and to press the consequences of the recognition; the acceptance as perfectly valid of whatever form of ministry is acceptable to the body of Christian people which

it serves, whether episcopal, presbyterian, methodist, congregational or baptist. It is on the footing of this mutual recognition that it seems to me the approach to a closer relation and the working out of some basis of union should proceed, and those of us who exercise authority or have influence may well use such opportunities as we have to encourage reciprocal interchange of acts of ministry on this footing as far as this may be practicable. It may have a brighter prospect of acceptance if we distinguish between the ministry of the denominations concerned and the rule and government of the body; the recognition of the ministry in the congregation in the first instance. The important points would be that the ministry should be recognized by the body concerned, its recruits not self-appointed but called by the Church and so possessing its authority, and on the profession of an inward call and of a surrender to the service of Christ in response to it.

If that were once conceded, and it seems to me to follow naturally from the admission of the Lambeth statement, the immediate result should be the acceptance of intercommunion. For a legitimate ministry implies valid sacraments. And it is surely somewhat extraordinary that a Church which claims its organization to be a spiritual one, whose unity is a unity of the Spirit, should make a common participation in the Sacrament of the Lord's Table contingent upon a form of ordering of the ministry, which, derived as it is from experience and possessing long historic tradition, rests nevertheless upon the use of a particular outward and physical form and manner of ordering, rather than upon a common confession of a faith which is spiritual and on a sharing of a spirit which is the Spirit of Christ. The argument that intercommunion should be the culmination of a unity already attained rather than a step towards its promotion seems to me fallacious. The unity is there in the common profession and in the possessing of the common Spirit. The ministry that possesses those fruits possesses validity. There can be nothing more likely to bring Christian men together than the witness through a common partaking of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper of their common allegiance to Him, and it would bear eloquent testimony to the reality of the thought underlying the Lambeth statement, the acknowledgment of

common membership in the universal Church of Christ. This too deserves encouragement. A combination of enterprise with caution is necessary; but we have always tended to err on the side of caution.

I suggest therefore that the most important step towards unity that can be taken to-day is the full recognition of one another's ministries as legitimate ministries in the Church of Christ, and the Sacraments administered by such a ministry perfectly valid, and the consequence of such a recognition intercommunion whenever it may be desired. The approach must come from the side of the Episcopal Church, for the other bodies always hold their doors open and offer us a welcome, of which we ought perhaps to be a little more ready to avail ourselves than we are. And I have no hesitation in commending the practice of intercommunion as things are. Although it is often assumed that such intercommunion is irregular and even disloyal, I do not for one moment admit this. Our own rules for our own members have no implication upon our action with regard to members of other bodies of Christians. I cannot think that our Lord would ever repel anyone who wished to draw near to Him in this way, whose approach would imply the humility of access and faith expressed in our own service, and I do not think that any member of any form of ministry in His Church is entitled to act otherwise than it is to be presumed our Lord would do. It is the Lord's Table, not man's; it is to Him the communicant comes with the other members of His Body.

Thus the separate bodies of Christian people would come together in something in the nature of a Federation rather than in any more complete unity of organization. And that appears to be likely to be the method of approach. A fuller union might or might not eventually be reached. It does not seem to me very important. It is the unity of the spirit that matters. Where this prevails it possesses its force and makes a manifest appeal. Whatever involves an approach to competition, much more to hostility, is unprofitable and mischievous, but it would be idle to pretend that within our own unity of organization these tendencies have no place. Nothing but the unity of Christ's Spirit can overcome them, and in manifesting that unity among all Christians we are working towards the expression of it in the

form of our organization whenever it may be felt desirable and opportunity offers.

If eventually organized unity in administration is to be attained it can hardly be by the simple acceptance of an episcopal system. In the definition of doctrine as well as in administration some broader basis than episcopacy would have to be devised, including the lay voice. Such a unity could be achieved by including perhaps under a joint presidency, such as finds occasional expression in Conferences to-day, some small administrative staff representative of the various elements in such an area as a diocese, with a larger administrative body, similarly presided over and similarly constituted for the country. This, however, lies far in the future. It is in the mutual recognition of our separate ministries and in the practice of intercommunion that I think the immediate prospect lies.

It may be well to add a few words on the Sacraments and specially on the method of the administration of the Holy Communion. There would necessarily be a wide liberty in the actual form used, whether such a Liturgy as our own or the more elastic plan adopted by some if not all of the branches of Free Churchmen; with what must be regarded as essentials defined, the celebration by a recognized minister, the elements of bread and wine and the words of the Consecration. But both in our own Liturgy in which some modification is clearly desirable, and in general we should desire at least a modern interpretation and a modern spirit. The Harborne Use so admirably arranged by Canon Richardson, agreeing as he happily claims in spirit if not in the letter with our accustomed form, but with the modifications we desire gives the great features—a simple Creed, a Preparation, a Communion, a Dedication, a *Gloria* and a Blessing. The Old Testament note, so conspicuous in our form, adopted from the Hebraic theology is omitted, and the emphasis laid on the union of the Communicants with one another and with their Lord, as they use this external rite to mark their feeding on Christ in their hearts by faith. But here is a genuine difficulty, the solution of which will very probably take some time. We need not suppose there would be great opposition to eliminating a thought so alien to the teaching of our Lord as the references to the wrath of God: but what sprang from this, the idea of

propitiation, forgiveness conditional on a satisfaction of an angry God by the sacrifice of the Christ, holds still too prominent a place in the theological outlook of many Church of England people and others, to be easily surrendered. Nevertheless if we press the interpretation of the atonement as relating to man and not to God, and the act of redemption as a revelation and not a transaction, we may hope that this grave obstacle to many minds may be presently overcome.

The same considerations apply to Baptism. Here we have not the same difficulty as in the case of the Holy Communion, for less stress is laid on the form of the service as a whole; the essentials are simple and are accepted on all hands, the use of water and of the baptismal formula. In cases of necessity, we recognize the legitimacy of lay baptism and we never refuse to accept baptism in a non-episcopal church. In the service we use we should desire the same modifications as we seek in the office of the Holy Communion, the absence of the Old Testament references and spirit, the stress on Divine forgiveness as in the nature of God's Fatherhood, the work of the Spirit as symbolized by and not operated by the external rite, the confession that each human child is God's by nature, getting rid of the artificial conception of a new creature begotten by the administration of the Sacrament. This is indeed a far-reaching change and might involve a more considerable revision of our form than the Service of the Holy Communion asks, but its importance is the less for our present purpose that the simple elements I have mentioned are all that is required now for the acceptance of a valid baptism.

The Revised Prayer Book Services for the Occasional Offices which Dr. Major has published, and for which we cannot be too grateful, give us precisely the kind of reformed Form which so many of us will be glad to see in use, containing as they do so much of the old phraseology to which we are accustomed with its associations, omitting what is out of date and having a sufficiently modern thought. Here we see an illustration of the advantage of a revision by one man rather than a committee, however competent the persons constituting the committee might be.

The great matters on which I desire to lay stress are the recognition of the non-episcopal ministries as proved valid by our Lord's own test, 'by their fruits ye shall know them'; the separation in our mind of the act of ministering in the congregation from acts of government as well as from the process of defining, as far as that may be desirable, Christian doctrine as the doctrine of the Church; and the practice of intercommunion as entirely in accordance with the mind of Christ.

The forces hostile to our common faith are strong enough and blatant enough to drive us to some common ground. We can hardly find it on any better foundation than just the acceptance of the Spirit of Christ and the common resolve to live in its power and to spread its influence. In the face of our opponents and in the face of our great need how small must seem the insistence on points of difference in order, in type of ministry, of the character of our services and of our theological position—tithing mint and rue and cummin rather than the weightier matters of the love of God and of the Spirit of Jesus and of the brotherhood, the eternal things that really matter.

CHRISTIAN ESCHATOLOGY: ITS ORIGINS AND VALIDITY

By Professor S. H. HOOKE, M.A., B.D.

' But often, in the world's most crowded streets,
But often in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life;
A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
In tracking out our true, original course;
A longing to enquire
Into the mystery of this heart which beats
So wild, so deep in us — to know
Whence our lives come, and where they go.'

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

THE author of the letter to the Hebrews includes, in his enumeration of the rudiments of Christianity, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. For him, apparently, they belonged to the foundations which it should not be necessary to lay again. Most of the elaborate eschatology and apocalyptic of Paul's letters soon disappeared from the official statements of the Church's belief, but these two elements, in varying forms, have survived in the Creeds to this day, as a witness to the inextinguishable craving in the heart of man, far older than Christianity, to pierce the veil which hides the future.

Professor Charles's great book, *Eschatology, Hebrew, Jewish and Christian*, the indispensable guide to all students of the subject, is a monument of scholarship, but, as is the nature of monuments, it is lifeless. Nevertheless, behind all the varied forms of changing hopes and beliefs, so ably analysed and arranged in chronological order in that immensely valuable source-book, there lies the history of a vital impulse whose first stirrings can be traced in the earliest records of man's life on earth, and which is still one of the strongest forces in religion, swaying even those who profess no adherence to any organized religious body.

The question of the origins of Christian eschatology, even though for the sake of clearness of exposition it is dealt with

separately in the first part of this paper, cannot be disjoined from the question of its validity. In a manner of speaking, the origins of Christian eschatology are its title-deeds, and our view of its origins will inevitably determine our estimate of its validity as an element in our faith.

Before we come to the discussion of its origins, however, it seems necessary to be clear in our minds as to what is Christian eschatology. This raises the question of authority. Whither shall we look for a definite statement of what we should believe concerning the future life and the consummation of the divine purpose for man? As soon as we turn to the Creeds we realize that they do not speak with one voice, and if we examine the early documents of Christianity we find that the letters of Paul, the Synoptic Gospels, the Fourth Gospel, the Apocalypse, and the Catholic Epistles, present such wide divergences in the matter of what we call eschatology that it is quite impossible to sum up the beliefs of the early Church about the final drama of the world's history and the future life in a few propositions.

Hence, for the purpose of this enquiry, we shall take the four elements common to the credal statements of the first five centuries of Christianity as a minimum statement of the content of Christian eschatology. Two of them we have already referred to as included in the 'word of the beginning of the Christ' (*Heb.* vi, 1), namely, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. The other two are the life of the age to come, and the return of Christ as judge. Only one of these is peculiar to Christian eschatology, the return of Christ, and even that, as we shall see, cannot be separated from earlier Jewish beliefs about the Messiah. Hence the immediate and simple answer to the question of the origin of Christian eschatology is that its fundamental elements have been taken over from Judaism. But this does not carry us far, and in order to see the problem in its proper perspective we must go back to the beginnings of human history and briefly trace out the reactions of human behaviour to the inescapable fact of death and its implications.

It is a commonplace in anthropological studies that in the early stages of civilization man's activities were directed to the control of his environment. It is also recognized that in these early stages of society collective consciousness, as the French

anthropologists have called it, was far stronger than individual consciousness. This point is of importance in connection with our enquiry, because, as we shall see, the growth of eschatology is immediately connected with that increasing sense of the importance of the individual which was largely due to the religious experience of the Hebrew prophets of the eighth century B.C. and onwards.

Those primitive activities which were concerned with the two principal interests of a community, food and procreation, do not directly touch our discussion, although the whole pattern of early human behaviour is so inextricably interwoven that it is difficult to detach any one of its elements and examine it separately. Nevertheless it is clear that, in the environment to the control of which these activities were directed, the fact of that strange phenomenon which we call death was a disturbing and uncontrollable element. One is tempted to linger over those aspects of primitive consciousness in the face of death, revealed by various customs and modes of speech as they have been recorded by anthropologists, but time will not permit of this, and we must be content to establish the fact that such primitive customs as contracted burial, the smearing of the bones of the dead with substances intended to simulate the appearance of life-blood, the provision of food, drink and weapons placed in the grave with the body of the dead, point to the firm belief in the continued existence of the deceased after death. This belief may well have been reinforced by those dream-experiences which are held by many anthropologists to be the origin of the primitive belief in ghosts and spirits. We may note here that it is generally recognized that wish-fulfilment is one of the principal causes of dreams, and it is probable that the same cause was responsible for the burial customs referred to above. One thing at least becomes clear as we advance to a more developed stage of civilization, namely, that the belief existed, expressing itself in a complex of funerary rituals, that the continued life of the dead depended upon the care of the living. It was thought that so long as the relatives of the dead provided funerary offerings and arranged for the recitation of the proper magical formulae, so long would the dead person enjoy a continued existence in the after-world.

Passing on from the twilight of these early stages of civilization to the fuller light of our knowledge of the ancient Near East, the culture area in which the eschatology which we are discussing arose, there are two salient facts which call for a brief notice. First, the sharp contrast between Egypt and Mesopotamia with regard to the beliefs and customs connected with the dead and the after-life; and, secondly, the emergence of a ritual pattern in which the death and resurrection of the central figure in the community are the dominant elements.

Turning to the first of these two points we find that, whereas in Egypt as early as the Old Kingdom period there had developed round the practice of mummification an elaborate funerary ritual and a detailed conception of the life after death, a very different situation prevailed in Mesopotamia. In Egypt, as we can see from the various illustrated texts dealing with the dead, the life after death in the realm of Osiris for those who had been declared *mà herw*, or justified, at the tribunal of Osiris, was a life of material pleasures and delights, where all the pursuits of ordinary earthly life continued to be carried on. But in Mesopotamia mummification was never introduced, and we find from the evidence of early Babylonian religious texts, some of which go back to the Sumerian period, that the realm of the dead in Aralu was a land of darkness and the shadow of death. Here is a description of the land of the dead from an early text :

‘ In the dark house, the dwelling *Irkallu*, from which whoso enters goes no more out, in the way from which there is no return, in the house whose dwellers see no more the light, where dust is their food, earth their meat, they see not the light, they sit in darkness, they are clothed like birds with a garment of feathers, where dust lies on door and bolt.’

In spite of the tradition of the early connection of the Hebrew people with Egypt, and the fact that Egypt dominated Palestine from 1600—1200 B.C., it is remarkable that the early Hebrew conception of the after-life and the abode of the dead shows no trace of Egyptian influence, but is clearly borrowed from the gloomy picture characteristic of Semitic religion. But both Egypt and Mesopotamia have in common the conception of a judgment of the dead, and this conception seems to have passed from Mesopotamia into Persia, according to the evidence of

early cuneiform grave-inscriptions from Susa. It is very probable that much of the eschatological material borrowed by late Judaism from Persia, can be traced back to Mesopotamia.

But the second of the two points mentioned above is of vital importance for the later development of eschatology. It is the remarkable emergence of a great ritual pattern which made people familiar with the conception, represented annually before them in dramatic form, of the death and resurrection of the king-god, a ritual which embodies, so to speak, man's supreme effort to control and turn to his own advantage the ultimate fact of experience, the fact of death. We have copies of the liturgy for the Babylonian New Year Festival, in which the ritual death and resurrection of the god was the central feature, as late as the Seleucid period. Hence it is not surprising that the conception of resurrection, quite apart from any moral considerations, should have been familiar in the culture area in which Jewish eschatology had its birth. We should also bear in mind that although Hebrew religion developed along a special line of its own, and ultimately came to be completely separated from all the other religions of the ancient Near East, yet it was exposed to the influence of religions in which the ritual pattern described above was dominant, for over a thousand years, and just at the moment when the most characteristic element in Jewish eschatology, namely apocalyptic, was making its appearance, the borrowing of ideas from those religions is most clearly marked.

Before we turn to the development of Hebrew religion as it concerns the subject of our study, let us sum up the bearing of the facts enumerated above on the question of the origins of eschatology. We have seen that one of the earliest human reactions to the fact of death was the refusal to admit that death was the cessation of existence. Hence the belief in some kind of life after death, that essential element in eschatology, is the first to appear. Then we find that the idea of some kind of relation between a man's conduct on earth and his state after death also appears very early in the form of a judgment, a trial before the gods, a weighing of the soul. Then we have, also quite early, the parallel conceptions of an abode of bliss and material happiness, and of a dark and dreary underworld of dust and shadows.

Finally, the most important element in Christian eschatology, the conception of resurrection, the conquest of death, is found to be present in the great religions of the Near East even before the beginning of the second millennium B.C. These facts admit of no question, and rest upon well-attested evidence. Comment on them is reserved until we come to the discussion of the validity of the eschatology which we are accustomed to regard as Christian.

Turning now to the development of Hebrew religion as it bears on eschatology, we may divide that development into three main stages, for the purpose of our study. The early period, the middle period of the prophetic protest, and the late, or apocalyptic, period.

In the first of these periods the main points which concern us are the following :

(a) The conception of the individual and his destiny is still closely bound up with his place in the community. The objects of his desire are a long and prosperous life, sons to perform his funeral rites and carry on his name in the community, and the favour of Jahweh in this life.

(b) The after-life and the underworld are conceived of in much the same way that we have seen to be characteristic of Babylonian eschatology. *Sheol*, the Hebrew underworld, is a place of darkness and the shadow of death. The word used for its inhabitants, the *Rephaim*, denotes a weak and shadowy kind of existence. Jahweh's authority does not extend to *Sheol*, and from it there is no return.

(c) Nevertheless, the continuity of community life is not completely broken by death, and the dead are regarded as still interested in the affairs of the living, and as able to give information and advice about the future, if the proper magical means are used to approach them. The passages of the Old Testament which bear this out are too well-known to need quoting.

(d) Rewards and punishments are material and confined to this life. The ultimate punishment for an Israelite was to be 'cut off from his peoples.'

The religious background of this period was undoubtedly an agricultural, fertility type of religion, dominated by the great

annual feasts. Jahweh could be represented by a bull-image without any offence to the religious consciousness of the time, and Hebrew religion was hardly distinguishable from that of Canaan.

In the second period, under the influence of the eighth century prophets and their successors, this ancient religious pattern was completely shattered, although elements of it survived to a late date. The main changes effected by the prophetic protest were :

(a) The discovery and setting forth of the conception of Israel's God as a moral person, holy, righteous, and merciful, whose rule extended beyond the narrow confines of Israel's land and embraced the whole habitable world.

(b) The assertion of the value of the individual and his personal responsibility to Jahweh, based on a relationship which extended beyond the present life, although retribution was still thought of as taking place on earth.

(c) The conception of history begins to emerge as a world-plan in the mind of God, developing in an ordered and foreseen course from the creation of the world to a consummation on earth which is conceived of in terms of a divine kingdom, in which Jerusalem is the centre, and all nations are subject to the rule of God. The conception of the ideal king also makes its appearance in this period.

(d) As the hopes of the prophets were still centred upon the earthly destiny of Israel, we find no marked development in ideas of the after-life. The most important change is expressed in the words of *Ecclesiastes* xii, 7, 'And the dust return to the earth as it was, and *the spirit return unto God who gave it.*' But no precise beliefs about the future state of the departed spirits appear until the third stage, with the emergence of apocalyptic.

With the sudden flowering of the apocalyptic movement in the beginning of the second century B.C. we have to recognize that no sharp line can be drawn between Jewish and Christian eschatology. The early Christian movement was, in its beginnings, a purely Jewish body, with a Jewish apocalyptic outlook and impulse. The only point in which the Christian movement

differed from its Jewish source, a point, nevertheless, of infinite significance, was that the central element in Christian apocalyptic was the acceptance of the historical person, Jesus of Nazareth, as the Messiah of God's appointment. Hence, when we enumerate the main features of Jewish apocalyptic eschatology, we are, at the same time, enumerating all the original elements of Christian eschatology. These are :

(a) We find now, for the first time, a sharp distinction between 'the present age' and the 'age to come,' or, as it was often called, 'the age of the Messiah.' All the frustrated hopes for 'the redemption of Israel' were now projected into this coming age. It would be ushered in by an act of divine intervention, preceded by a period of great tribulation, the *peirasmós* of the Synoptic Gospels. Those who passed through this time of trial would become partakers of the 'life of the age to come' in the Messianic kingdom.

(b) What appears to be the most striking new element in the apocalyptic pattern, the figure of the Messiah, is nevertheless the revival and transformation of a very ancient element, the king-god of the old ritual pattern, in whom the hopes and desires of the community were centred. In Jewish apocalyptic the figure of the Messiah takes many forms, but that which was probably the most influential in Jewish Palestinian circles in the time of Christ was the conception of the supernatural Messiah, reserved in heaven by God until the time appointed for his revelation as the divine agent of judgment and the setting up of the kingdom of God on earth.

(c) With this projection of the apocalyptic hope into the future there arose the problem of how the righteous dead were to obtain their part in the life of the age to come. This was met by the introduction of the idea of resurrection, borrowed, as we have seen, from the old religious pattern. The righteous dead would be raised with physical bodies capable of participating in the joys of the Messiah's kingdom. Along with this appears the parallel belief in the resurrection of the wicked, also with physical bodies, capable of suffering the punishments which they deserved. A further consequence of this development was the conception of an intermediate state, and the appearance of

descriptions of the various abodes of departed spirits, some being places of fire and torment, and some imagined as treasures of light and joy where the spirits of the righteous await the consummation.

(d) Lastly, a distinction appears in some of the Jewish apocalypses, a distinction which is carried over into Christian eschatology, between the temporary kingdom of the Messiah on earth (lasting for 400 years according to 4 *Ezra*, or for 1,000 years according to the sources which have been followed by the author of the great Christian Apocalypse), and the eternal kingdom. The temporary kingdom was to be preceded by the great tribulation and the judgment of the living. At the close of the temporary kingdom the present heaven and earth were to be destroyed by fire and replaced by a new heaven and earth in which the eternal kingdom would be the great consummation of all.

Before we turn to the question of the validity of these conceptions for our faith to-day there is one very important point to be dealt with. It is clear from the Synoptic Gospels that Jesus introduced into the idea of the Messiah an element which was not previously to be found in Jewish thought, namely, the death and resurrection of the Messiah. We have not time here to discuss the reasons which brought Jesus to this position. But it cannot be denied that the resurrection of Jesus was the central point of early Christian preaching. It was regarded as an historical event which rested upon unshakable evidence, and upon the resurrection of Jesus, as interpreted by Paul, the resurrection of believers depended. It was the foundation-stone of faith. Hence we have a double problem to face when we raise the question of the validity of Christian eschatology. First we have to settle for ourselves what value we are to attach to all these elements whose origin we have traced; that is, we have to decide how far the fact that all these elements are embodied in the Old Testament and in the teaching of Jesus Himself, guarantees their validity for faith. Secondly, we have the far more difficult and delicate question to face, namely, the question of the value of the historical evidence for the resurrection of Christ, and further, of the meaning of the word 'resurrection' in this connection.

With regard to the first of these questions it is clear that only one element in this ancient eschatological pattern can be considered as resting to any extent upon evidence which might claim to be historical, that is, the belief in the existence and return of the spirits of the dead. To those who adopt an authoritarian view of the Scriptures such stories as that of the raising of the spirit of Samuel by the witch of Endor, or of the raising of Lazarus, constitute a sufficient guarantee of the validity of the belief that the spirits of the dead continue to exist in some intermediate state or place after death, and that it is possible for them to return to earth in some form or other.

But for those who have adopted the point of view upon which our Modern Churchmen's Union rests, the fact that these stories are found in the Scriptures does not constitute a guarantee of their historical truth, nor of the eschatological ideas underlying them. We are bound to examine the evidence on its merits, and it is probable that most of us would hesitate to accept either of these stories as historical, although for different reasons in each case.

But the crucial question in this regard is the resurrection of Christ. Here the problem is much more difficult and complicated, and it is clouded by theological and emotional considerations. One thinks of the famous scene in *The Brook Kerith*, where Paul, confronted by the living Jesus, refuses to believe his assertion that he had never really died and risen again. But, while there can be no doubt of the real death of Jesus and its profound consequences, an unbiassed examination of what is regarded as the historical evidence for the resuscitation of the dead body of the Lord after it had been three days in the grave has led many Christians to the position that the appearances of the risen Christ, upon which the main weight of the belief in His resurrection seems to have rested, were not events taking place in the world of sense, but spiritual experiences whose reality was of another order.

Moreover, in considering the question of the validity of the main elements of our eschatological pattern, we have to remember the significance of their origin. The evidence seems to be fairly clear that the belief in the continued existence of the spirits

of the dead, that is, in the persistence of their personality in a form which could be recognized by those who had known them, and which involved their continued participation in the life of earth, rests mainly, if not entirely, upon the conscious or unconscious motive of wish-fulfilment. Dream-experience points in the same direction. The presence of this motive is particularly clear in relation to the belief in some place of torment or punishment in the after-life. It is well known that the recrudescence of such beliefs has always been specially marked in times of persecution, and the greater part of the pattern of early Christian eschatology was taken over directly from the Jewish apocalyptic which was the product of the darkest period of Jewish national suffering and frustration.

Hence it seems that we, who may not accept a solution of the problem by the easy way of authority, are forced back upon what was the way of Jesus, the way of discovery and adventure into the unknown. Whatever we may come to believe concerning the future life will have to rest upon our own experience, our own proving of ultimate values.

It may be said of Jesus that in dying He surrendered all the ancient values of His people, and most of what was dearest to Himself. It made possible Paul's vivid conception, born of his own experience, of the new life in the Spirit, freed from all the ancient frustrations of nationality, class, or religion. The process of continual dying which is fundamentally Christian is the only way to new life, but it may involve the surrender of much to which we naturally and rightly cling, even to the surrender of those elements in our eschatology which have been a comfort to us and a lamp in darkness. Most of that eschatology has been built up on our conviction of the value of that personality without which we could know nothing of any system of values at all. It is not easy to envisage a future in which all those precious things, those values painfully acquired through suffering, all the earthly love which we have known and found most truly divine, will be so dissolved and changed as to be unrecognizable by the persons which we are now.

But while we may not fashion the future to our heart's desire, it is not impossible that, by clinging to our own vision of what

we now desire that future life to be, we may be unconsciously impeding the development of 'some better thing,' as the author of the *Letter to the Hebrews* says : 'God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.'

'It doth not yet appear what we shall be,' but we may hold fast to the faith that love is immortal, that the values here wrought out are eternal and indestructible, and that the true value of our eschatology is to have preserved in imperfect expression the belief in the indestructible nature of all that is divine in us and in the universe.

CHRISTIAN UNITY AND WORLD EVANGELIZATION

By the REV. A. G. FRASER, M.A., Warden of Newbattle Abbey, Scotland,
Sometime Principal of Achimota College.

IN treating of this subject to-night I want to treat of unity not in one aspect only. Christian unity means brotherhood. It means seeing life through the eyes of the other man, and it is thus I would have us think of it. A West African re-rendering of Isaiah's vision of unity ran as follows :

'Our ruler shall be inspired, wise, understanding, strong, knowing and reverencing God. He will never judge by appearances, nor be moved by gossip. He will deal fairly with the feeble, and give a square deal to those who cannot state their case. He will lay out the merciless with his punishments, the bully with his sentences. In that day the primitive and the educated will be friends, the commercialists and farmers will be colleagues, the rich and poor will be comrades, men of different colour shall naturally mess together, and all will give themselves for the generations yet to be.'

It is three thousand years since the prophet dreamed, and the realization is not yet, but it is coming. To-day the educated and uneducated, the strong and the weak, are not one. There is still a colour question and a race question. There are divisions, bitter often, within the religious folds. There is still a world of men red in tooth and claw. But there is hope, ever held by greater numbers, in the ruler whom Isaiah foresaw.

St. Paul tells us that in Christ Jesus we who were once far apart are made near by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace who has made us both one. For He has removed the barrier that was between us. We have now one common access to our Father by One Spirit. We must, then, be one. In the kingdom of that long-foretold Ruler there is no schism, no colour bar, no jungle. He creates unity, makes us seek unity through the sacrifice of Himself.

None the less unity does not come, any more than a fair garden, by sitting still and lying in the sun. There is cruelty, injustice, scorn in our world. There are still religious men who would put burdens on the consciences of others: there are still exploiters and robbers of the houses of the poor. We have to re-

member that Christ was not only smitten but smote. He rebuked the Pharisees; He turned out the traders with a scourge. Force is not in itself immoral. The only purely moral thing is love. The only utterly immoral thing is ill-will. Force is not always due to ill-will; yet force usually increases ill-will. Force used by a white man against a brown man, by a rich man against a poor man, or *vice-versa*, increases ill-will right along one group front.

At times an iron hand is needed. Isaiah was a lover of peace, yet his ideal ruler was to strike down the ruthless, and our Lord in one of the most terrible of passages, after describing the sentence on the merciless creditor, says: 'My Father will do the same to you unless you each forgive your brother from the heart.' It is the Father who uses this awful force on the ruthless.

Love has a creative moral ideal, and means not only more than absence of combat, but may mean stern combat. I agree with those who would regard equality of opportunity for all as a more desirable goal to work for than that of peace. Peace, as I see it, could, in the absence of love, only be maintained by entrenched injustice. It would cover terrible sores with glad-rags. The sores would still spread. Love will work for understanding, for improved and increased personal relationships; it will resist all that makes for division.

The messengers of the Churches, they are the glory of Christ when they stand for brotherhood, for the value of those for whom Christ died. We know that race prejudice is the enemy of Christ. We know exploitation is but robbery such as He denounced. And we are placed in a position where silence should be more impossible for us than it was for our Master.

If wrong is allowed to pass unrebuked it continues, and it breeds ill-will between groups of men. Ill-will spreads so long as the cause of irritation is not removed. The best instrument for removing Anglican injustice is an Anglican; for removing European bullying, a European. The most aseptic instrument in any case should be found in the community that does the wrong. Most missionaries to-day are sent into lands where grave injustice and wrong are being inflicted on the peoples amongst whom they live by the race from which the missionaries are drawn. In these circumstances, can they remain silent and keep out of these questions? I saw a letter from an experienced

Governor the other day in which he said : ' The missionaries to whom the people will listen are men like Andrews, Archdeacon Owen, and Schweitzer. As in the case of our Lord, the people hear them gladly.'

I like Gandhi's answer to Montague. He had come with a political deputation, and Montague said to him, ' How have you, a social reformer, found your way into this crowd?' Gandhi replied :

' I could not be leading a religious life unless I identified myself with the whole of mankind, and that I cannot do unless I take part in politics. The whole gamut of man's activities to-day constitutes an indivisible whole. You cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into water-tight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity. It provides a moral basis for all other activities which they would otherwise lack, reducing life to a maze of sound and fury, signifying nothing. You cannot say I shall confine myself to this or that and do nothing else.'

That is a good answer. If we had not limited religion's field we would not be in that maze of sound and fury we so sorely feel to-day. And I cannot see how the Gospel of the Incarnation can be preached intelligibly unless we identify ourselves with our exploited brethren in their pain.

Our Lord prays that we all may be one, ' that the world may believe that Thou hast sent me,' one flock, one shepherd. But that means we have to be with the toad as the harrow goes over him, not only with the farmer. Unity is demanded of us not only in spite of differences in creed and ritual, but in spite of differences in race and colour, in wealth and culture. St. Paul tells us that God has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth. I presume he was speaking from the heart enlightened by Jesus, not from the head enlightened by anthropology. But the anthropologist to-day preaches the same. Descended not for thousands of years only, but for millions, we probably came from the same stock. Closely related animals cannot interbreed with any success. The offspring of the horse and donkey is sterile. But there are no tribes or races that cannot interbreed.

Again, the variations distinguishing one race from another are largely acquired. For instance, the migrants from all over Europe during the last hundred years to America are markedly settling down into a common type, and that in a century. The

Jews, however, have been scattered for two thousand years, and yellow Jews are to be found in China, brown in Bombay, black in Africa, and Saxon-fair in Northern Europe.

Again, our blood is divided into four classes, A, B, C and D. These classes are equally divided amongst all races everywhere—in the Congo, in China, in Berlin. I may interchange blood with an African or Chinaman when I dare not do it with my cousin. I have had to teach pupils of twenty nationalities and more, and I have not found the children of any one superior in natural ability to those of another. There are no inferior races; backward races there are. These will come on as they get opportunities of mixing with others and of sharing in the stock of our common knowledge.

We are one flock and there is one Shepherd, and our practical recognition of this fact is more important than any credal formulary.

‘I tell you truly, in so far as you did it to one of these brothers of mine, even to the least of them, you did it to me. . . . In so far as you did not do it to one of these, even the least of them, you did not do it to me.’

Schism is a matter of the spirit, and is one thing whether its manifestation be in the religious, racial or material field. The Lamb of God taketh away the sin of the world, that sin of self-assertion, the desire to be the elder, more righteous, more important or richer brother.

A highly-placed ecclesiastic, a keen schismatic who recognized no comity in missions, once told me he understood Africans because he was a missionary. He understood them less than he did the followers of our Lord who worked with missions other than his own. And the reason was just because he was only a missionary and not a brother. He was out to convert. To understand he would have had to be as willing to receive from them as to teach. Our Lord asked the woman of Samaria for a drink; He was a suppliant before He was her teacher. We can only carry the Gospel on the principles laid down in practice by our Lord. The Gospel is not only that God is our Father, not only that Jesus is the Son of the Father, but it is also that we are called to be sons of God, joint heirs with Jesus. That means a deep reverence for men, and a new vision of our brothers. I like

the African proverb on personality : 'Any bumpkin can count the fruits on a tree ; it requires God to count the trees in a fruit.'

Jesus Christ taught His Gospel by becoming flesh and by living with us as in a tent. It meant that His outlook was conditioned by those amongst whom He lived. It was their scriptures He knew, their social and economic conditions He understood, their aspirations that were familiar to Him. But it also meant that they came to understand Him and they saw His glory, and those with whom He had tented went out aflame.

I have had to pick many colleagues. I have never asked their creed. I have sought for men and women who aimed at being disciples of Jesus Christ, whose ambition it was to be his servants. And I have sought those who desired to serve the people amongst whom they were going to work, to serve indeed. Thus I have had as colleagues Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Wesleyan, Quaker, Baptist, Anglican and others. The Colonial Office Inspectors of 1932 mentioned as a remarkable fact that our staff was so varied and united :

'Held together by the bonds of Christianity are members of the Church of England, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Wesleyans, Baptists and members of the Society of Friends.'

It is no accident, too, that where schisms between differing denominations are bridged in friendship, so too are racial differences. A writer in *The East and West Review* for April, 1939, says :

'Achimota breathes a uniquely friendly inter-racial atmosphere. There is no place in Africa, I venture to assert, where black and white not only pray together, but also eat together, laugh together, and sing together, on the same scale, whether extensive or intensive. In my opinion, indeed, it is this atmosphere more than anything else which is characteristic of and most precious in the college. . . . This atmosphere seems natural and inevitable at Achimota to-day. . . . I believe that nothing is nearer the heart of the missionary message than just this social atmosphere. Africa to-day, like India twenty-five years ago, is sick to death of the kind of piety which permits black and white to eat together (if anywhere) only at the Table of the Lord.'

The African Christian when independent of our control, works for unity. Dr. Aggrey was brought up in a Wesleyan mission and was a keen supporter of its work to the day of his death. But in America he became an elder in a Presbyterian church, was confirmed in an Anglican one, and studied dogmatic

theology under a Roman Catholic priest, hoping that on his return to the Gold Coast he might serve each of the great missions there. African leadership would heal the divisions which European leadership makes inevitable.

Our business is to contribute, to enrich, not to convert. We can only help another race as Christ helps us. We come to Him for needs we feel. As He meets them, we come to know Him and to see greater needs He can as greatly meet. Jesus our Lord takes us into His friendship and walks with us in the environment and circumstances in which we are placed. He gave no encouragement to those He trained to proselytize. He mentions proselytizing once, to condemn it. He did not try to upset the Judaism of His followers, but they learnt more than Judaism as they lived as in a tent with Him. He gave His life to their enrichment; they found Him to be the Son and thus they came to see the Father. We have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Imperialism in religion is as evil as it is in politics or economics. If any man should desire to know more of Jesus Christ because he had met Him when with me, I should be glad. But I have no right to attempt to conquer him for Christ or for anything else. God made man to be immortal and to be the image of His own eternity. Who am I to set out to remould him? Crusades are marauding expeditions. Freely I have received, freely must I give. If any man desire our education or medical assistance he must have what we can give. And we dare not, as Christ's followers, make as a condition of our service that those needing it should first listen to our religious instruction. Imagine Christ using such compulsion! To believe one has much to impart and little to receive is to induce a spirit of swagger, of Lucifer, rather than of love.

All service is made difficult by the imperial setting in which we do our work. Imperialism means exploitation in this age as in all ages, and wherever it is found. It demands for its ease of conscience that the ruler shall be called a benefactor and that the ruled shall be considered inferior. In Africa, it is true, the European is in advance of the African in many arts. It is equally true that he is far behind him in many qualities essential to a truly humane society. Cullen Young tells how he was

travelling with porters and wished to camp by a prosperous village. The porters urged him to go further to a village on ahead, which they said was a really good village. He agreed, and they arrived after dark and camped beside it. Next morning he awoke to find the village poorer, untidier, worse housed than some already passed. He pointed this out to the porters and gives us the very words of an old porter's reply :

'A good village is where the headman and the elders are respected by all ; and where they too have regard for all, even for the children. It is a good village where the young respect parents and where no one tries to harm another. If there is even one person who belittles another person or works harm, then the village is spoiled.'

Yet we are expected to feel these people inferior. Backward in some arts—yes. Time was when Cicero could say, 'The stupidest and ugliest slaves come from Britain.' Then our fathers had not got into contact with other races and were backward. They were not inferior.

Yet the Church abroad to-day gets this inferiority idea into its work and expresses it in its organization. A fine and distinguished missionary once consulted me as to the plans of a college his mission was building. I saw that he had placed the European masters in houses at a considerable distance from the dormitories and the houses of the African staff. I said : 'Are you having segregation? You cannot have any unity or much impact on the students if you do.' He replied : 'It is not for missions to fly in the face of public opinion.' Public opinion ! He was not speaking of the opinion of the people he had come out to serve, but of the prejudice of the foreigners who dominated them and lived by their taxation.

This false and foreign 'public opinion' leads to our being blind to the God given history and heritage of the races we should serve. For instance, if we desire evolution and not revolution we should nowhere educate the children of another race without seeing to it that the parents or leaders of that race have a dominant voice in the direction of education. To-day, with hardly an exception, government and missionary education in our colonies is controlled by foreigners. Foreign autocrats think out problems, work out projects and see them carried out in lonely and almost completely unimaginative benevolence and

parsimony. Yet it is over a hundred years since Sir Thomas Monro warned us that :

‘Nothing can more swiftly emasculate national life, nothing can more surely weaken national character than allowing the education of the young to be controlled by foreign influences, to be dominated by foreign ideals.’

Action tells us power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely. Power most certainly corrupts us as missionaries, and destroys our reverence for our peoples and our capacity for being brothers. We are rulers over that which should be God’s heritage and theirs. The other day a church was built in an African city with the avowed object of having a place where European Christians could meet in as strict seclusion from Africans as though it were a club. Two or three European Christian workers refused to enter it or to take part in its worship. Others agreed to work for it on the ground that it would be more possible to influence this select congregation if conforming to their line of conduct. It is not the principle one would usually find advocated in dealing with drunkards or adulterers. But then these are recognised as sinners. This far more heinous sin of the spirit is not so estimated by our ‘public opinion.’

In all these ways the imperial Orontes is flowing into our Tiber. We missionaries become largely officials, and officials with a foreign outlook. In some missions the Indian or African workers are spoken of as ‘Agents,’ a word which denotes their inferior status to that of the ‘missionary.’ Kirkegaard says : ‘Nothing, nothing, nothing is so absolutely repugnant to God as everything which is official’; and why? Because the official is impersonal and therefore the deepest insult which can be offered to a personality. This officialdom is the curse of our commerce. The company is more heartless, because farther from human touch, than the individual; it is the curse of our Colonial Office, where grave matters of human life and suffering become questions of policy or profit. And this curse invades our missions and makes a new division, and a serious one. As persons, which of us would oppose Africans running schools for their children? As persons in touch with them we would welcome their initiative and assist for all we were worth. As

missionary secretaries, as members of committees, we often crush them, for they invade our monopoly, and they differ from our work in ways we have not time to understand.

T. E. Lawrence wrote :

‘I meant to make a new nation, to restore to the world a lost influence, to give 20,000,000 of Semites the foundation on which to build an inspired dream-palace of their national thoughts. So high an aim called out the inherent nobility of their minds, and made them play a generous part in events; but when we won it was charged against me that the British petrol royalties in Mesopotamia were become dubious and French colonial policy ruined in the Levant.

‘I am afraid I hoped so. We pay for these things too much in honour and in innocent lives. . . . All the subject provinces of the (Turkish) Empire to me were not worth one dead English boy. If I have restored to the East some self-respect, a goal, ideals . . . I have fitted these peoples in a degree for a new commonwealth in which the dominant races will forget their brute achievements and white and yellow and brown and red and black will stand up together without side glances in the service of the world.’

There you have the personal as contrasted with the official view. It is the Dutch socialist, De Kat Angelino, who strikes the same note. ‘The key to every colonial policy lies in the appreciation of the essential solidarity of humanity as a whole and in the elimination of racial pride.’ Without that all talk of trusteeship, as uttered by politicians, financiers, civil servants and missionaries, earns the African’s witty comment, ‘Trusteeship is the fig leaf of imperialism.’

We cannot spread the good news of the Father except as fellow children of the Father. But children must not assert their superior age, if they have it, when with other children. Unclaimed seniority is an asset, claimed it is rightly resented.

And in their own lands they know more and have a richer experience of life there than we have, if we could only see it. I have seen missionaries in the Phillipines, where intoxication was almost unknown, running a prohibition campaign, because it was done in America. Far more tragic is our preoccupation with drink or unchastity in Africa whilst, with few exceptions, we close our eyes and mouths to the awful evils wrought by the greed of settlers and mining companies. Wherever missionaries are inactive in face of these things they are not neighbours to those fallen among thieves, nor representatives of the Lord of the widow and orphan.

To seek unity in the way I have outlined means identification with the oppressed and therefore persecution. It also means that to the poor the gospel becomes not only preached but lived, and so accepted. Long ago in Jewry it was said that if all Israel would but keep the law for one day the Kingdom would come. If, not through a few exceptions but as a whole, the Church would bear the griefs and carry the sorrows of the despised and the poor it would 'cleanse the body of this empire, through the glory of the Lord.'

DOCTRINE AND DEVELOPMENT

By the Rev. J. S. BEZZANT, B.D., M.A., Canon-residentiary and
Chancellor of Liverpool Cathedral.

DOCTRINE is not religion, but is essential to its life. Though it may not appear very prominently in the origins of a religion, doctrine is its genuine product, always implicit and eventually explicit. Whatever more religion may be it is always, as Dr. Webb writes,

‘a conscious relation or attempt to get into relation with what, however crudely imagined or conceived, is yet imagined or conceived as somehow containing in itself the mysterious power at the heart of things. It thus always involves at least an implicit view or theory of what, when reflection is sufficiently advanced, is seen . . . to be the Ultimate Reality.’¹

In the modern world there may be individuals who are very religious and who believe very little. A man may profess and achieve indifference to the reasonable implications of his ideals and manner of life; but that is a fact the interest and significance of which does not extend beyond his personal biography; it is not evidence that religion is independent of doctrine. What is plainly true of religion generally is specially true of the Christian religion, which has been and must remain closely bound up with particular historical events. Simply to affirm that certain events happened, and that they are religiously significant, implies not only doctrine but ultimately a philosophical theology or philosophy of religion. If a religion is to spread and exercise great influence, the time soon comes when its beliefs must be formulated explicitly, defended, shown to be in reasonable relation with one another and with any other relevant knowledge about the world and man. The need for this is all the greater if there appears to be conflict between religious and other ideas. Doctrine, then, and still more theology, though always a development, is a necessary development.²

¹ C. C. J. Webb, *A Century of Anglican Theology*, p. 65.

² In this paper, though the distinction cannot be a very exact one, ‘doctrine’ denotes affirmations or summaries of belief, such as creeds and other formulas, while ‘theology’ denotes their further explication or defence in relation to other knowledge or probable belief. The latter is often more effective in its influence upon life and action than the former.

Among reasonable people doctrine influences life because and only because it is believed to be essentially true. Certain doctrinal statements may not be accepted as true in the strictly literal sense of the words in which they are expressed; and in such instances some allegorical interpretation is accepted as expressing a reality which cannot be at once so briefly and so fully or so richly conveyed in the language of more formal thought. But those who hold such an interpretation believe that they are thereby conveying the real truth so far as it can be conveyed: they do not think they are merely putting an edifying meaning upon what is mistaken or false. The primary importance of doctrine which is believed to be true has in modern times received a melancholy illustration in the manifest decline of the influence of Christianity coincident with the collapse and disintegration of the popular theology in terms of which its official creed was formerly preached and understood.

The Christian system of doctrines is very elaborate and impressive. Nowadays no one—not even those who are most insistent that certain Christian beliefs, set forth in propositional form, are infallibly true or indefectible and irreformable—would deny that they represent a development. This recognition was the mark of Newman's theory of doctrinal development in his famous Essay on the subject. He knew that history shows that Christianity, alike in its doctrine and in its practice, has undergone a process of development or growth. It was not given to the world in an initially perfect form, or in any one of the forms it has assumed at various periods since its rise. It is not a fact that, say, the doctrines and practices of early Protestantism are explicitly taught in Holy Scripture, or that they can be at all naturally directly deduced from that source alone. The fact that Scripture needs any interpretation at once opens up issues which cannot be decided from Scripture itself. Such issues are why certain books, and no others, form the Canon of Scripture, the nature of the inspiration and the authority of those books. Newman also recognized that a long development preceded doctrine that was taken for granted in the teaching of Jesus; while in 'the apostolic teaching no historical point can be fixed at which the growth of doctrine ceased and the rule of faith was settled.'

However, in view of certain plain and disconcerting facts of

the history of Christianity, a serious question arises. How is it to be known what developments are true and legitimate and which are not? Newman's theory asserted, as indeed it required, an absolutely reliable authority in order that the process of development should be rightly guided. Christianity was held to embody a supernatural revelation. The developed formulation of Christian doctrine possessed divine authority because the revealing activity was in fact continued throughout the developing process. Formulated doctrines, therefore, were still supernaturally communicated or divinely revealed truths, sufficient and final. Any conflicting knowledge must be erroneous. The Church, being the organ of the Holy Spirit, the continuation of the Incarnation, and therefore bearing supreme spiritual authority, could always distinguish the divinely revealed from the man made. Newman's position was, in its essentials, the Roman Catholic position, namely, that the doctrine which the Church has extracted from the Bible and from Church Tradition are divinely revealed, divinely sanctioned, and irreformable.

To this position there are many well-grounded objections. It is sufficient to indicate two errors which lie on the surface of it. Each is fatal. One is that it ignores the fact that the authority which guides the developing process is itself a product thereof, has shared in the changes and, as a historical phenomenon, is relative and not absolute in all its attributes. The other error is the idea that development consists only in positive growth and in more complete definition. The important and manifest fact that development has a negative aspect is ignored. New truth by no means always merely adds to the old : it often modifies and may disallow the old.

Protestants no less than Catholics have maintained that Christian doctrines, though not the same ones or expressed in the same terms, carry the finality of supernaturally revealed truths. They treated the Bible as sufficient without the Church. Of this position nothing need be said, as it has proved more vulnerable than Newman's, and has now disappeared except in circles in which modern education is ignored or regarded as an enemy of the truth. Equally untenable is another theory, often in one form or another, maintained in our own Church. It holds that within explicated doctrines in their developed forms there

is a fixed and unalterable 'deposit' (παραθήκη) of faith, referred to in the Pastoral Epistles, which constitutes the 'faith once delivered to the saints' of Jude's Epistle; or it may be extended to cover definitions made during the first five centuries, or doctrines formulated down to the time of the breach between East and West. If the 'deposit' is restricted to doctrine formulated by the date of the Pastorals or that of Jude, it was certainly something much simpler and less complex than the doctrines alleged to be guaranteed by appeal to it, and it is now impossible to recover it with precision; while if it is extended to the longer periods there is, as Dr. Sanday said, no justification whatever for treating these odd phrases as a prophetic anticipation of the whole body of Christian tradition down to and beyond the Athanasian Creed. The 'deposit' theory has this advantage—that it can be made to include almost anything that is desired and seems to exempt its supporters from maintaining their case on more rigorous or reasonable grounds. It has no other advantage.

The truth is that the view of the Christian faith as consisting of formulated statements of doctrine or theology which constitute an inerrant and unchangeable deposit or corpus of knowledge is, root and branch and from first to last, untenable. It conflicts with many and manifest facts and is capable of disproof.

The occurrence of divine or supernatural revelation, in the fullest sense of the words, of necessity contains two activities—the divine act of disclosure and the human apprehension of it. The divine activity, whether it be in the creative process as a whole or in special events on special occasions, cannot become *revelation* until its significance is apprehended by man. God may utter a divine word or manifest His nature and will in a signal event or series of such events, even by incarnating Himself in a divine-human person, but all this only becomes revelation when it is appreciated and understood by men for what it really is. Therefore human activities no less than divine are always implied in the assertion of revelation. The true significance of revelatory events may always be imperfectly apprehended, even distorted, because of the defective understanding, the partial knowledge, the erroneous opinions and the sin of its human witnesses and interpreters. The divine guidance of the creative process and of the special occasions of revelation therein

no doubt includes the divine guidance of human minds ; but that does not and cannot happen without the free and willing co-operation of human minds as such ; and there is no evidence that divine guidance, though it may quicken human powers and make possible a deeper vision of religious truth, is ever such as to obliterate all human limitations. There is convincing evidence to the contrary. The divine relation to man is not any kind of relation, but is a personal one ; and a miraculous removal or over-riding of human limitations, such as any claim to human infallibility must imply, would replace the personal by an impersonal relation in which man would become the passive recipient and then the mechanical transmitter of supernatural disclosures. The revelation of a personal God to persons, so long as it is a personal relation, cannot take any other form than that of enabling men to get their own insights. If God can ever rightly act with man in any other way, then the extreme economy with which He does so is a mystery as inexplicable as it is superfluous. Why use throughout the ages methods of which boundless error and failure are the inevitable and useless consequences ? As Dr. Oman observes, if the obedience of submission to infallible disclosures will satisfy the heart of God, then the methods He has actually employed with man are chiefly distinguished by the chaos they have permitted.

In his very able and attractive book, *The Nature of Belief*, Fr. D'Arcy writes of the act of divine faith as ' that whereby we believe without doubting whatever God has revealed,' and says that we make this act ' in any article of our creed when we take God's word for it ' ; it is a personal act of self-surrender which says, ' My God, I accept what You say because You say it.' But we must ask, Where is this word of God, to which we would all so surrender ourselves could we but hear it ? To that question there is no satisfying answer because nothing can be pointed to which is free from historical and human intellectual conditioning. Divine self-disclosure is known to us only as refracted through the human medium with all its imperfections and ignorances ; and its significance is inevitably interpreted in the terms of the particular and partial outlook of one generation. Its rediscovery, as the pure word of God, by succeeding generations is an insoluble problem. The elaboration of religious faith in the

form of doctrinal propositions is a process of reflective interpretation. Where then is there any reason to assume or evidence to convince that the process is safeguarded from human error? Similarly the alleged intuitive apprehension of such doctrinal truths in Scripture by the *testimonium Sancti Spiritus* gives no consistent or historically permanent results.

The revelation of God in Jesus, though we confess that in him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, was in fact transmitted through the very real limitations of its first recipients who were not preserved from manifest errors; in its necessary adaptation to the understanding of other peoples, by which it became capable of universal significance, it mingled with many ideas of but temporary value; its further theological development and definition brought in other transient elements; while the acceptance of definitions does not exclude differences of interpretation of them, and they are often accepted from other motives as well as the disinterested love of truth, even if the disinterested love of truth guaranteed its attainment, which plainly it does not.³

The notion of unchanging persistence, by its welcome contrast to human life and its conditions, makes a strong appeal; and indeed if we take short views we may find a relative stability which may deceive us. This is particularly true in the sphere of Christian doctrine. Moreover Christian religious life is intimately related to Christian doctrine: there are the strongest grounds for believing that Christian religious life, as a recognisably distinctive life, would survive the dissolution of Christian doctrine for a while, but not for long. All that lives grows; and living growth always implies the interaction of elements of permanence and stability with elements of change, and the achievement of harmony between them. In construction of thought, as in material architecture, no achievement is possible if the foundations are continually dug up. A Church can have no bond of union in doctrine if there be nothing more reliable and permanent than the judgment of the individual as the only test of truth; and I know no evidence for the likelihood of vigorous corporate

³ See the chapter on Authority in vol. ii. of Prof. A. E. Taylor's *The Faith of a Moralist*.

religious life without some bond of union in doctrine, whether the amount of doctrine forming the bond be large or small. Hence it was inevitable that with the collapse of the view of Christian doctrines as divinely revealed propositional truths which develop only by receiving additional explication, a fresh basis of permanence should be sought which should be consistent with development in its proper sense, such as history shows to have been actual. In modern times this basis has been alleged to be found in religious experience. The basis of Christian doctrine, it is claimed, is the continuing coporate Christian experience, of which doctrines are the formulation and theology the explication and defence in the varying thought forms of particular ages. There is a measure of profound truth in this claim. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. If God exists, the soul of man must be open to divine influences. Unless there is real communion of God with man, religion, revelation and theology are correctly to be described as respectively illusion, superstition and mythology.

Now doubtless religion, and religious experience, are more than doctrine or thought. But I submit that it is as certain as anything can be that religious experience is always, in respect of its content and character, so associated with already existing human ideas and beliefs, hopes and fears, as to be incapable of isolation from them; they have been acquired otherwise than from religion. The contents of our minds as we seek any experience or as it comes to us largely determine what we feel or experience. The fact is that experience includes beliefs and beliefs imply doctrine. Destroy the beliefs and the experience ceases or changes. If anyone claims to know in his direct experience the power of the risen and ascended Christ, he is in fact interpreting his experience, whatever it may be, by his knowledge, otherwise derived, of the existence and character of Jesus Christ and of some propositions about him. So when I read the great Bishop Westcott's words that 'the faith of the Christian is in a person, and not in doctrines about him,' and Dr. Temple's affirmation that doctrines are not the subject-matter of religious faith since that status can only rightly belong to the living God and His Christ, I realise that these sentiments would be approved in this conference; but they do not satisfy

me. Is it to be supposed that these great Christians have experienced an immediate and intuitive certainty of the present existence and activity of Christ and that he is such as to be the proper object of religious faith? They cannot mean that they have come to know him by the means whereby they know their earthly friends. Unless I am utterly mistaken it is ultimately because they have been informed from other sources, and have learned by rational judgment and experience inseparably bound together, that there is a Christ who may properly be the object of their religious faith that they can speak of him as they do. If they did not believe certain doctrines about the existence and nature of Christ—affirmations which, no doubt, might be variously expressed—they could no more so speak of him than the heathen do. There is, I am sure, no experience bearing a recognisably or typically Christian character whereby it can be distinguished from all other experience, unless it be that of persons already informed, which means doctrinally informed, about Jesus, and who accept some propositions about him, and who stand to him in the relation of believers in him.

Again, the content of Christian feeling or experience is not uniform or static. No experience can be separated entirely from the culture which environs it. We know the past through a present whose values affect our view of it. To claim that Christian experience of the fifth, thirteenth and twentieth centuries is identical with that of the first century is mere assertion and no more likely to be true than an assertion that the Definition of the Council of Chalcedon, the doctrinal system of St. Thomas Aquinas, and the Report of the Doctrinal Commission are all identical in content with the documents of the New Testament. No doubt there is, alike in the experience and in those documents of different centuries, something, perhaps much, in common; and there is doctrinal and historical continuity. But similarity and continuity are not unchanging identity. Christians of different ages may accept the same doctrinal forms as truly representing their experience, but we cannot know that from age to age the inner content of religious feeling remains the same. New experiences, new knowledge, new social factors, give to at least some elements of religious feeling new shades of intensity and meaning; even the constant relation in which

believers have stood to Christ is qualified by similar factors.⁴

Further—and this is of vital importance in any claim that the appeal to religious experience can invest Christian doctrines with the unchanging permanence formerly believed to attach to them as divinely revealed truths—the explication of religious experience in doctrines uses categories which the experience itself has not supplied: it is made in forms of thought drawn from the intellectual environment of a particular age. It follows that unless those forms of thought are adequate and unalterable it cannot be claimed that experience has received a final embodiment as religious truth. St. Paul's experience was intense and transforming; but it is plain, for example, that his Atonement-doctrine was greatly influenced by his Pharisaic training. Obviously intense conviction lies behind it, but the forms in which that conviction is expressed were drawn from his environment. The same is true of the doctrine in later times when ideas of 'ransom' and of legal 'satisfaction' were more prominent. The most enduring elements in these Atonement-doctrines go back to *Isaiah* liii. The Second Isaiah, reflecting upon the dealings of God with His people, found an explanation of their trials in a theory of vicarious sacrifice. This interpretation of the sufferings of the righteous portion of a nation was by Christians applied to an individual, to Christ, as elucidating the experience and accounting for the great change which took place in themselves when they became his followers. Eventually the Crucifixion was, with the aid of some forced analogies, fitted into the framework of Jewish thought about sacrifice. So fully was this done that the fact of the Crucifixion and the sacrificial theory have often appeared, and to many appear to-day, to be a single truth. A particular doctrine defines a fact, whether the fact be a historical event in the outside world or an inner experience, always and only within a certain sphere of thought, and therefore, in Dr. Whitehead's words, 'you cannot claim absolute finality for a dogma without claiming a commensurate finality for the sphere of thought in which it arose.' When, therefore, members of the Doctrinal Commission accept the fact that Anglicanism has no distinctive

⁴ See further Chapter III of Prof. George Galloway's *Faith and Reason in Religion* and the same writer's paper, *A System of Doctrine as Revealed Truth* in *The Modern Churchman*, vol. XIX, pp. 409 ff.

philosophy, and are content that it should so continue, they are accepting implicitly, as indeed they recognise, that no Christian doctrine, in the form of its statement, is necessarily final or unalterable.

Take all the great words in Christian doctrine—Incarnation, sin, atonement, redemption, forgiveness, grace, salvation, resurrection, the communion of saints, eternal life, heaven and hell. We—and ‘we’ does not mean only those who are called Modernists—explain, interpret and openly set aside some meanings which in the past have been put upon those terms, meanings which in their day often exercised much more influence upon thought and the practical life of religion than the brief and more permanent statements in the creed. We keep these terms and enlarge or revise their meanings in accordance with the knowledge and experience of our own time. If and when such re-interpretations commend themselves to the general judgment, they are quietly accepted without any formal act of the Church which, it is then not infrequently claimed, has always taught them.

In its early days, Christianity would either have disappeared altogether or have become insignificant but for the flexibility which, throughout the ages since, has enabled the Church, among different peoples, to adapt her message to the changing conditions of life and thought. That power of adaptability is one of the chief advantages of our religion. It is, however, no less true and important that this flexibility in response to varying needs and circumstances might easily have transformed Christianity beyond recognition unless it had been confined within real limits by more important elements of continuity and persistence. It preached one who ‘is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever,’ who yet had many things to say which the first or second generation of Christians could not then bear. In thinking about doctrine in relation to development it is essential to avoid the error of supposing that nothing can be permanent unless we can say in a few sentences of completely adequate phraseology exactly what it is. Who can so state the principle of continuing identity in human life from infancy to old age? The elements of permanence in Christian doctrine, recognisable amid much that has proved transient, present through all the development

of theology, may be said to be the acceptance by an act of reasonable faith of the thought of God which dominated the life and teaching of Jesus, itself the result of a long development; the Church's conviction that she is the trustee of a revelation of God which she is bound to transmit; the acceptance of Christ himself and of the essential truth of what the Gospels record about him as alike the crown and the criterion of all revelation, so that in him we have at least *finality of direction* in the way we are to go; that the activity of Christ did not cease with his death but is continued by the Spirit of God through him; the conviction that he that hath seen him hath seen the Father, in such wise that God in Christ is to be worshipped and the divine nature to be conceived in his likeness; that if he be removed from the central place the certain result is reversion to lower conceptions of God; that Christ is of supreme significance for human redemption; that in the realm of morality there is no higher or more exacting demand than his 'Follow me,' so that—as J. S. Mill wrote in words which expressed what had always been and will remain true—it would not be easy 'even for an unbeliever to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve his life'; the continuity of the Christian society itself, recognisably the same through all its changes and in spite of the disastrous divisions which have impaired its life and witness and impoverished its doctrine. These and no doubt other elements, though they might be very differently expressed and the significance of their content and implications variously formulated, have secured and will continue to secure real continuity and stability in the development of Christian doctrine.

Human religious needs and their satisfaction are also of importance when we look for elements of stability and permanence in the developing doctrine of the highest religion. The object of religion has been very variously conceived; religion has indeed expressed itself in variegated mythologies and theologies. Nevertheless the human attitudes and needs which it awakens and satisfies are characteristically uniform. Awe, veneration, worship, prayer, sacrifice, the sense of dependence, insignificance and guilt, an instinctive obedience, the need of purification, the experience of deliverance and joy—these

activities and experiences are found in all religions. They have contributed so much in the growth of Christian doctrine, not a little of which stands in the most vital relation to them, and they are so permanent in the religious life, that they will ensure in the future, as they have done in the past, the continuity and stability of essential Christian doctrines, however much their intellectual formulation may develop or change.

But it is also true that Christianity is and can never cease to be a historical religion. Another of the great sources of its strength is that it was not only or mainly evoked and projected from the religious needs and imaginings of men but that it rests upon a foundation of particular historical events of which the basic Christian doctrines are the interpretation. Here again is a large element of permanence not found in non-historical systems of thought or doctrine; for the latter, when understood, either convince or fail to convince, and there is little more to be said. With historical doctrinal statements, however, there is always not only what their text says but also what it has come to mean in the religious society built upon belief in it. Whether what a doctrine has come to mean is legitimate or not is a matter for reasoning, and ultimately, in a living religion, it must be for the religious community to decide. This principle is now accepted as regards the interpretation of Scripture: it cannot be denied its application to the creeds and other statements of doctrine which have been extracted or developed from the contents of Scripture. The view of the facts at the basis of Christian doctrine may change or, if the view of them remains the same, a given explanation of them may fail to satisfy. In either or both of these events the consequent changes may nevertheless represent a return to some earlier phase of doctrine, even if with significant differences. The events at the time of the rise of Christianity are still of vital importance, and therefore documents which record them and others which reveal their early meaning will also remain of vital importance and a frequent corrective of errors, all changes and developments notwithstanding.

The development of its doctrine by the Church is of first importance if its life and vigour are ever to be renewed or strengthened; it will not be done unless the Church becomes

much more alive to the necessity of it. In modern times there has been an immense development of the natural sciences, in critical and historical studies, and in philosophy which takes account of them, all of which is almost entirely independent of Christian theology. Some of it, no doubt, has little or no bearing upon Christian belief, but much of it has great relevance. Christian doctrine was mainly determined by a view of the inspiration of Scripture which assumed the strictly literal and equal inerrancy of both Testaments and all that in them is; it was set in the framework of Jewish cosmogony; it is the work of men who thought that irregularities and miracles in the order of nature occurred without any of the cautions and limits which would now be set by all educated persons, whether they admit the occasional actuality of miracle or not. It is really out of the question that modern people should be required to assent to every item in formulas constructed under such conditions. That, however, is not enough. It is now clear that Christian creeds and formularies cannot be usefully developed by the simple insertion of a number of 'nots' in them. The wide divergence between theology and secular thinking in the ordinary preaching and teaching work of the Church is still the most formidable fact confronting the practical task of the development of doctrine. Various half-measures have been taken, and some of them have met the need temporarily; some are trying to 'build again the old wastes'; but it is very hard to feel that the need for a full and frank unification of religious and well-grounded secular thought is squarely faced as a necessary and definite ideal. The task is not to accept uncritically whatever represents itself to be modern thought and to reject whatever in our doctrinal inheritance conflicts with it. If the old is not always good, the new is certainly not always better. Ancient issues need to be set in their contemporary contexts if they are to be fairly judged, and modern issues seen with modern eyes, otherwise we shall never find enduring equivalents. If an ancient formulation of doctrine is removed from its ancient setting and simply inserted in its old form into the modern setting, it will probably create insoluble perplexities and be incapable of real assimilation with knowledge or probable belief: it may thus easily become less significant or even lose its meaning. The

relative permanence of the doctrinal system we inherit was largely due to the thoroughness with which earlier Christian centuries faced the task which is also ours; and we could do nothing better than make the spirit if not always the letter of their reasoning a pattern for our own. The danger is lest the necessary changes and developments be resisted and arrested, not by scholars and theologians, but by the rank and file of Christian teachers inspired by the false idea that there is no other way of safeguarding the real values and the foundations of Christianity. Real changes do not imply, as is sometimes asserted, that in the past 'the Holy Spirit led the Church astray.' Divine influence and guidance do not eliminate all human limitations or dispense us from following reason and the leading of experience; the view that they do is really historical fatalism which may easily lead men to quench the Spirit, and it deprives history of moral and spiritual significance.

Though religion is not philosophy its doctrines must be related to metaphysics unless they are to become isolated from life and thought. But the difficulties and hindrances to the development of doctrine do not arise only from within the Church. Little can be done until 'the flight from reason,' which is characteristic of the modern age, is turned back. The recognition that reason has its limits and that they are narrower than the classical ages of Christian thought supposed, has led to a denial of its nevertheless sovereign rights. In the field of theology I should affirm the judgment of Mr. De Burgh in the concluding chapter of his Gifford Lectures, that there will be no real progress and no very useful or permanent developments in Christian doctrine until we return to a belief and confidence in reason, and abandon the appeal to alleged higher faculties, whether religious feeling, intuition, imagination, or even faith itself if regarded as non-intellectual or super-intellectual. Certain prominent modern religious movements have exercised an influence which tells strongly against the claims of reason. As soon as it is held that there is a divorce between reason and natural theology on the one hand and religious faith on the other there is an end to objectivity in religion and a surrender of its claim to yield knowledge of truth. Appeals to alleged non-rational sources of value can never vindicate the doctrines of

the Christian religion or assist their useful development. But, as Mr. De Burgh also strongly urges, it is equally necessary to get rid of the estimate of reason and intellect as limited to the sphere of logical inference, which inevitably results in a much too narrow view of the possibilities and scope of reasoned knowledge. There is a need for a wider conception of reason itself, so as to include not only its specialised activities in logic, science and so-called secular philosophy, but also the higher activities of the mind in aesthetic, moral and religious thinking. If this could be secured, and if there could be aroused within the Church a passionate desire and regard for truth and a deep respect for knowledge, there would be no reason to fear that a comprehensive Church would lose the essentials of the Christian revelation. It will be, as the Doctrinal Report says, 'the work of many generations to work out the desired synthesis of different apprehensions of the one revelation of God in Christ'; it can only be done by 'a rich variety of methods both of approach and interpretation' with 'the utmost liberty of thought compatible with spiritual fellowship.' That common discipleship of Christ is primary, and the real basis of harmony. Wherever it exists, varying doctrines, pending synthesis, may contribute to a development both comprehensive and true, and certainly need not work disaster. The supremacy of reason, in the wider conception of it, is compatible with the recognition that in this changing world reason can never reach finality and therefore can never be the complete test of Christian doctrines; indeed it will be recognised that ultimate postulates, though not unreasonable, cannot be proved beyond peradventure. The basis of the Christian religion will never be a merely prudential acceptance of the demonstrable. But doctrines irreconcilable with reason are not to be accepted on other grounds, for the faith which issues in religious life and thought is itself a reasonable activity and will always, through all changes and developments, save the doctrines so established from the fate of dissolving symbols.